



FORTH

housing association Ltd.

SpeakingForth

The newsletter of Forth Housing Association Ltd

Spring 2022

Inside:

My Forth	P2	Garden Competition	P11
Forth's Development Strategy	P3	You Said We Did.....	P12
Fire Damage Rectified	P6	Working Towards Compliance	P13
Fire Safety and Electrical Safety.....	P7	Anti-Social Behaviour	P14
Management comm members.....	P8	New Boiler	P15

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 14th April at 5.15pm.

Office Reopens: Tuesday 19th April at 9am.

In addition, please note the following office closures in May and June:

Office closed Monday 2nd May, Thursday 2nd June and Friday 3rd June.

***Emergency Repair:** These are repairs which are considered necessary to prevent serious damage to the building, danger to health, risk to safety, risk of serious loss or damage, or serious inconvenience to your property.

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

Gas Central Heating -
0800 048 2710 (Saltire)

Gas Leaks – 0800 111999

For 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 Forth

We encourage all our tenants to use our online portal “My Forth.”

The benefits are that you can pay your rent immediately online, report faults/repairs, access any letters for you and check out our notice board.

If you click on this link on our website - **www.forthha.org.uk**, you will see “My Forth on the top right hand page as highlighted below.

Please complete the information to register on-line. However, if you do not know your tenant reference number, please call us on 01786 446066. We can also help set you up on My Forth, if you are having any difficulties.

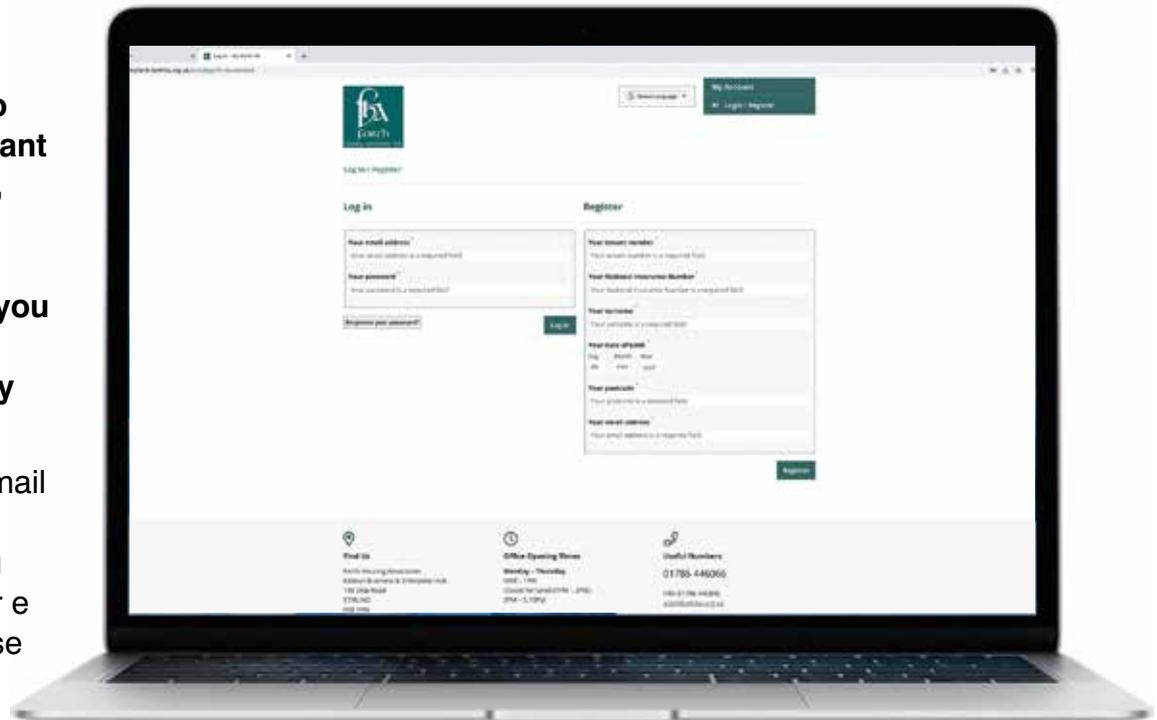
You do need an e mail address to use this service. Also, if you have changed your e mail address, please notify Forth to update our

records. This will enable My Forth to keep you up-to-date with all the latest information.

Thank you for all the positive comments on this new service including those below:

“I find My Forth plain and simple to use and can quickly pay my rent.”

“I still have a little fear when using it but think it is the way forward and more and more people will use it.”



Forth's Development Strategy – please help shape our plans

We want to know what you think of our development plans – in part because warm, secure, well-designed houses are expensive to build, and because we expect them to last a long time.

As the houses built by Forth are paid for by our tenants through their rents (around 40%) and taxes (around 60%), it is important that you have a say in how your money is spent.

The Development Strategy aims to clearly communicate:

- Why we need to build more homes
- Where they are needed
- Who we are building for
- How we will engage with tenants, those looking for a house and our strategic

partners, like Stirling Council so that they can support and influence our development programme

- How we will pay for new house construction
- The standards those houses must meet
- How we will manage the risks associated with investment in new build

Please get in touch with the office for a copy and then send us your views before 30th April 2022.

Alternatively, you can access a copy of the Development Strategy on My Forth or log on to **www.forthha.org.uk**.

For further information please contact Niall Patterson, our Development Coordinator on 01786 431922 or e mail **niall@forthha.org.uk**.

FUEL SAVINGS

With the increase in fuel costs following these 5 simple rules could save you money.

1. Turn the heating down by 1 degree - £80
2. Turning lights off in unoccupied rooms - £14
3. Using a 30C wash instead of 40C / 60C - £9
4. Avoid using standby mode - £30
5. Unplug inactive electrical items - £30

Save up to **£163** a year!*

*Based on Energy Savings Trust Report

Cheaper Broadband Packages – Stay Connected

The cost of living crisis is prompting people to take a closer look at their finances to find possible ways to reduce their outgoings and one way is to look at your broadband package.

Those on a low income or Universal Credit or other means-tested legacy benefits from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) may be eligible for £15 monthly broadband packages available from BT and Virgin Media.

The regulator, Ofcom says it has found that

the packages - sometimes known as 'social tariffs' - are currently available to around 4.2 million households in receipt of Universal Credit, but only 55,000 homes - have taken advantage of the deals so far. Ofcom said, as a result, millions of lower-income households were missing out on an average annual broadband saving of £144 each.

For more information Log on to BT at: <https://www.bt.com/exp/broadband/home-essentials> Or Virgin Media at <https://www.virginmedia.com/help/essential-bb>

Rent Increase – Keeping Rents Down By Providing Low Increase!

After consultation with our tenants, we are applying a 3.9% increase from 1st April 2022. This is less than 2 of the increases that we consulted on with all our tenants via My Forth and a postal questionnaire. This 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.

However, should you need any support claiming benefits or are struggling to pay your rent, please contact our Income Maximisation Officer, Tracy Doran for advice on Direct Dial 01786 431921.

Also a big thank-you to all those who responded to this survey via My Forth our on-line portal and by our postal survey. The winner for returning their survey sheet is D Gemmell, Dunblane who wins a £25 voucher.



FIRE DAMAGE RECTIFIED

It is always good to hear good news especially after a situation that none of us want to find ourselves in. After extensive fire damage we are pleased to let you know that our tenant and her family have returned safe and well to their property, in Raploch.

Forth have eradicated the smoke damage, installed a new kitchen and boiler and redecorated throughout.

Ms Meri said: I am so pleased with all the work that has been done and I can't wait to use my new kitchen."



Thanks to the smoke detectors installed no one was hurt in the fire.

Fire Safety and Annual Electrical Safety Check



Fire causes extensive damage, and we would remind all our tenants of the importance of providing access for the annual electrical safety check. Our Senior Property Services Officer, Paul Fraser, said: “Most of our tenants provide access for this annual check. However, sometimes we have difficulty in gaining access and ultimately this check can save lives. So please respond when you are contacted.”

All smoke alarms need very little maintenance and the majority now last for 10 years. However, it is vital to test them weekly to make sure they work.

We are also pleased to advise that all our homes meet the government’s legal requirements regarding smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms.

You should never:

- Hang or dry clothing and towels on or near the cooker
- Leave your cooker, grill or oven on when you go out – even on a timer
- Leave electrical wires or cords near the cooker
- Keep anything on top of an eye-level grill
- Put anything metal in your microwave – even tin foil

As part of their commitment to building a safer Scotland the Fire Brigade offers everyone in Scotland a free home fire safety visit and will help you sort out a fire escape plan.

Contact Fire Brigade: Tel:**0800 0731 999** or Text “FIRE” to **80800** from your mobile phone, to arrange a visit.



Do you Want to Become A Tenant Member?

Being a member of Forth allows people to actually have a say about how Forth is run and develops in the future.

Membership costs £1 for life and members receive a share certificate which never increases in value. What are the benefits of being a member?

- attend the AGM,
- vote for the Management Committee
- stand for election to the Committee
- appoint the auditors

The full membership policy with details of how to apply is available by logging on to:

<https://www.forthha.org.uk/uploads/2021-05-27-09-42-37-MembershipPolicy2021pdf-87855.pdf>

For a copy of our Membership Application, log on to:

<https://www.forthha.org.uk/uploads/2019-08-12-11-58-14-MembershipApplicationandL-61002.pdf>

Management Committee Member Vacancies

Do you want to help improve the lives of others in the Stirling area?

We are recruiting for new Management Committee members to help shape change as we move forward.

Currently, we are particularly interested in applications from:

- individuals with skills and experience in governance, human resources or information technology
- our tenants and members of their household

- our sharing owners and members of their household
- residents in areas where we provide housing

We will reimburse out of pocket expenses, including childcare and travelling costs for attending meetings. We also provide induction training together with supporting ongoing personal development. As well as helping to improve the lives of others, you will be helping to develop the communities of

Stirling and eastern villages.

Our Management Committee currently meets monthly by zoom (usually held on the last Monday of the month – between 7pm and 9pm). However, we hope to return to in person meetings at our offices soon.

If you are interested in becoming a Committee member, please contact Jacqueline Norwood, Interim Director on Tel 01786 446066, or e mail jacqueline@forthha.org.uk.



Competition Winners

VOUCHER WINNERS
£25



A big thank-you to all our tenants who took part in our recent surveys. It is this feedback that lets us improve our services to you. The following have all received a £25 voucher.

- Rent Increase Survey – D Gemmell, Dunblane
- Gas Repair – M Caddies, Cornton
- Gas Service – S Cross, Cornton
- General Repair – A Anderson, Fallin
- Landscape Gardening – E Millar, Bannockburn

Please continue to let us know what you think of our services by responding to our surveys.



FREE BUS TRAVEL FOR UNDER 22s



As from 31 January 2022 every 5 to 21 year old living in Scotland can travel for free by bus access free bus travel if they have a valid National Entitlement Card (NEC) or Young Scot National Entitlement Card (Young Scot NEC).

If you are 5 to 15 years old, your parent or guardian will apply for you. If you are 16 to 21

years old, you should apply for your own NEC or Young Scot NEC.

Children under 5 years old do not need an NEC as they can already travel for free on buses.

For more information and to apply for the card, visit the National Entitlement Card website <https://getyournec.scot/nec/?opt=NEC-Card/301>

Garden Competition – **Will You Be A Winner?**



H Arthur, Cornton



J Duff, Riverside



A lot of our tenants' gardens were in full beautiful bloom last year and we are therefore pleased to announce that we are again holding our annual garden competition. A guest judge will choose the winning gardens over the Summer period.

The 3 categories will be £40 for best garden, £25 for best basket/pot display and £50 for best scheme. Many of our tenants take great pride in their gardens and last year there were 3 sets of winners who each won vouchers.

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@forthha.org.uk. Just give your neighbours name and address that you are nominating for the garden competition.

We are sure that you will agree that our developments look lovely when people take the time to look after their gardens and keep all paths/driveways free of litter and weeds.

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

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Anti-social behaviour means different things to different people and the effects on neighbours can vary widely. What you may however consider as anti-social behaviour might be considered more as a nuisance or annoyance. In other circumstances the behaviour can be first and foremost, a criminal activity before it becomes a housing issue to investigate.

We always hope that the anti-social behaviour can be resolved satisfactorily. However, if it is evidenced that the tenant is acting in an anti-social manner and their behavior does not improve we will take the appropriate action and ultimately, they could lose their home. This will only happen if a Sheriff agrees that the anti-social behaviour is unacceptable enough to merit this extreme decision to grant a decree for eviction.

In 2021, we were granted a decree for eviction against a tenant for anti-social behaviour – excessive noise, damage to property, alleged drug dealing. The property was recovered by enforcing the decree. Whilst this was an extreme outcome, we provided the tenant ample opportunity to change their behaviour and sustain their tenancy. Since the departure of this tenant, our remaining tenants within this development are enjoying a more peaceful and settled environment.

We are currently reviewing our Anti-social

Behaviour Policy to ensure that it is in line with current legislation and good practice. Once our review is completed, we will have an update in the summer edition of the Forth Estate newsletter.

In the event that you have an issue with anti-social behaviour in your development, please do the following:

- Contact the relevant agencies, if appropriate, at the time of the incident e.g.
 - Police Scotland on 101 (or 999 in an emergency)
 - Stirling Council's Safer Communities on 0845 40 40 40
 - Crime Stoppers UK on 0800 555 111 or via <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/>
- Make a note/diary of incidents, in case you need to refer to them
- If it is a housing related matter, please contact us to report the incident by telephone on 01786 446 066, email on info@forthha.org.uk via our website <https://www.forthha.org.uk/> or via your "My Forth" account

When it comes to anti-social behaviour, everyone has a responsibility to do their bit so please help us to help you. For more information please contact your Housing Services Officer, Elaine Shepherd or Kelly Cadden, at the office, who are here to help.

NEW GAS BOILERS RESULTING IN SAVING FOR TENANTS!

We have completed this year's gas boiler contract which saw 44 properties receive Worcester Bosch boilers that were fitted with a hive smart control.

With these efficient boilers and smart controls fitted it increases the EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) rating of the property from a band C to a band B.

The feedback we have from tenants who pay their gas weekly via smart meters or top up cards, tell us that, £10 worth of gas is now lasting them a week and a half instead of a week. In the current climate of soaring utility bills this is great news.

Our tenant Mrs McCulloch of Raploch who recently had a boiler installed commented:

“The installation guys were fantastic, they worked fast and hard and did a great job of cleaning up after them.”

We will be continuing with our gas boiler replacements so that more tenants can benefit from savings to their gas bill.

For more information on our planned maintenance contracts for this year please log on to:

<https://www.forthha.org.uk/repairs/planned-work-to-your-homes/>



Raploch boiler and controls.

You Said – We Did!

Keep the Comments Coming!



You said: Unhappy with dampness in property.

We Did: Reinforcement of 5 point check regarding dampness to Maintenance team to ensure dampness is not misdiagnosed.

You Said: Unhappy with the communication by Maintenance regarding access arrangements.

We did: Preferred means of communication to be taken into account by Maintenance section when liaising with tenants regarding access arrangements.

Working Towards Compliance – Scottish Housing Regulator

In our last edition, we discussed the Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) which is submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) annually and the Engagement Plan. Our Annual Assurance Statement is available on our website. Log on to our downloads page for more information: <https://www.forthha.org.uk/downloads/>

SHR publishes an Engagement Plan for every social landlord in Scotland. Each plan describes why they are engaging with

the landlord, what it needs to do, and the information it needs to send to SHR.

Our Engagement Plan has been reviewed by SHR and we are working towards compliance. We have an Action Plan which confirms the work we are carrying out in order to achieve compliance. Our Management Committee is committed to working their way through the Action Plan which strengthens our governance and ultimately improves services to our tenants.



Estate Visits by Your Housing Services Officer

Your Housing Services Officer will be carrying out estate visits during the month of May.



Elaine Shepherd

will carry out estates visit during the week commencing -

2nd May 2022, to the following areas:

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



Kelly Cadden will carry out estates visit during the week commencing - 16th May 2022, to the following areas:

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

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

If you have any items to dispose of, please contact Stirling Council on **01786 40 40 40** to arrange an uplift. Uplift of fridge/freezers is a free uplift, however there is a charge for other items. Please contact the Council for further information www.stirling.gov.uk



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

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