



FORTH
housing association Ltd.

SpeakingForth

The newsletter of Forth Housing Association Ltd

Spring 2023

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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 6th April at 5.15pm.

Office Reopens: Tuesday 11th April at 9am.

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

Office closed Monday 1st May, Monday 8th May, Friday 26th May and Mon 29th May.

***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, or would do if not attended to.

If you have an 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 Emergency Out of Hours contractor on Tel No: 01786 446066 option 2 to be redirected.

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



The way we charge your rent is changing

The way in which we charge your rent is changing from April 2023.

We currently charge your rents on the 28th of each month however this will now change to the 1st of each month.

From 1st April 2023, you will see this change take place.

We are doing this to make it clearer for tenants as rent will be charged at the beginning of each month and to also make it easier for reporting purposes for staff in the office.

What does this mean for me?

Nothing will change for you. Rent is still due in advance, as it is now, on or before the 28th of each month. Your rent charge won't be applied on 28th March but will now be charged on the 1st April.

Section 1.5 of your Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement states that:

“1.5 The total monthly sum payable, in advance, on or before the twenty eighth day of each month, at this time is **£amount due.**”

You should continue to pay your rent as you do now. Whether that is weekly, fortnightly, four weekly or monthly, and particularly if you have entered into a repayment arrangement.

The amount that you are charged over the course of the year does not change it is simply a change to the date the rent charge is applied.

The next steps

This change will take effect automatically on 1st April 2023, therefore there is nothing you need to do.

Should you have any questions however, please contact the office on 01786 446066 and a member of the team will be happy to discuss this with you.



Satisfied Customers!

Earlier this year independent consultants, Research Resource, completed a satisfaction survey with a third of our tenants and the results are in!

We are delighted to report that our tenants have remained very satisfied with our services and our overall satisfaction has increased to

96%. This is 2% higher than our result in 2019.

Over the majority of our services our figures have increased and we will be producing a detailed report for our Summer Newsletter as well as for our website. Satisfaction with how good Forth is at keeping tenants informed

about service decisions has remained consistently high at 98%. Also, satisfaction with opportunities to participate has increased from 94% to 98%.

Watch this space for a more detailed report including comparative results with other landlords in our area.



Rent Increase – Keeping Rents Down By Providing Lower than Inflation Increase!

After consultation with our tenants, we are increasing our rents by 5% applying from 1st April 2023. 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 responses were:

- 70% opted for 5%
- 29% opted for 6%
- 1% of tenants said that they did not agree to either

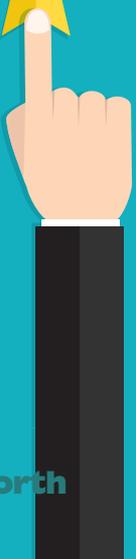


Options Appraisal

We require to check if we are still meeting our objectives outlined in our Business Plan when a Senior Officer leaves. This involves looking at the options that are available for the development of our services and discussing these with staff, tenants and Management Committee. We have been

discussing these options with our tenants and the feedback is on our website at www.forthha.org.uk

For more information please contact our Interim Director Sharon Brady-Wardrope at Tel: 01786 446066 or e mail Sharon.bradywardrope@forthha.org.uk.



Money News Round-Up



Our Income Maximisation Officer Tracy Doran is here to help you. Please contact Tracy at the office if you have any questions or would like assistance with completion of forms. Tracy can be contacted on Tel 01786 431921 or e mail tracy.doran@forthha.org.uk.

Fuel Support Fund – have you had your payment?

Most tenants will be aware that over the past few months the Association has been distributing items and providing direct cash payments to tenants in relation to fuel support.

This was money applied for by the Association via the Scottish Government and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA). The photograph shows the range of items we have been able to distribute to tenants including airfryers, radiator reflector panels, solar banks and smart plugs.

We are also supporting tenants with direct cash payments and fuel vouchers.

Almost all tenants now have received their £30 cash payment, however if you have yet to receive this please call the office on 01786 446066 and a member of staff will be delighted to organise this payment for you.



Change to Universal Credit

As from 30th January 2023 the administrative earnings threshold for Universal Credit is increasing. Any claimant of universal credit who has earnings of less than £617 for an individual or less than total of £988 for a

couple claim can be placed in the intensive work search regime. This could mean that these claimants will require to attend the Job Centre either weekly or fortnightly and be 'actively seeking work'.

Winter Heating Payment Update

Cold Weather Payments have been replaced in Scotland by Winter Heating Payment. Cold Weather Payment was a £25 payment from DWP (Department of work and pensions) made automatically to those eligible if the temperature dropped for 7 consecutive days.

If between Monday 7th November 22 and Sunday 13th November 22 you were in receipt of :-

- Income support or
- Employment and support

allowance (income related) or

- Jobseekers allowance (income based) or
- Universal credit

AND

- Disability premium or
- Support or WRAG (work related activity groups) premium or LCW (limited capability for work or LCWRA (limited capability for work related activity) element or
- Carers premium/element or

• Child under 5 years old
Or

- Pension credit

You should be eligible for Winter Heating Payment from Social Security Scotland which is a one off payment of £50.

For those that are eligible the payment does not require to be claimed and will be paid automatically by Social Security Scotland direct into your account from February 2023.



Healthy Living - Cancer Research Fundraiser

We are pleased to announce that £684 has been raised for Cancer Research UK by our Housing Services Officer Kelly Cadden who took on 100 skips per day in February.

Many staff got on board with Kelly to help her get to her target, which she succeeded!

Staff have been extremely supportive in helping Kelly raise these funds, whilst helping her each day to achieve this. Kelly said:” It has been great to promote physical activity amongst staff whilst raising funds for such a worthwhile charity. We all know someone who



Kelly pictured with Callum MacDougall who also took part in the challenge.

has been affected by cancer and this will help in the final sum of over £2.2 million that has been raised nationwide by this event.”

Partnership Working In Practice

Stirling Community Enterprise (SCE), also based at 146 Drip Road, Raploch are currently running a training programme for 7 young people who have recently left school. This is an employability course to help prepare them for the world of work. Part of the 12-

week programme consists of them going out on a work experience placement 2 days a week for 10 weeks.

SCE had requested if Forth had the scope to provide any joinery work experience for the young person. We asked if MP Group, our repairs Contactor, could facilitate

work experience, which they responded to positively. The young person started the work experience placement with MP Group on the 28th February 2023 with a Health and Safety induction and will be working with the joinery dept throughout our housing stock.

A Fond Farewell – Margaret Glencross is Retiring

At the end of March we said a fond farewell to Margaret Glencross, Corporate Services Assistant, after 17 years working with Forth.

Many of you will have spoken to Margaret on the phone over the years or met Margaret at reception. Therefore, those of you who have spoken to Margaret will know Margaret's friendly voice and the important role she has played in our customer service. As well as this role Margaret has also supported the administrative function to our Management Committee.



Margaret said:
“Although I may not have had the opportunity to say goodbye to everyone who phoned or called in – I will miss your calls and friendly chats we have had over the years at our Viewfield Place, Wallace House and now Drip Road offices. Also, recently our summer Funday which everyone enjoyed.

Thank you to Management Committee and my colleagues for their kindness especially post covid days. I have a lot to look forward to but won't forget my time at Forth!”



Although we are all going to miss Margaret, we wish her a healthy and happy retirement with her family.

Mould and Dampness – We Are Here to Help

Mould & Dampness is caused when warm moist air comes into contact with cold surfaces and water droplets form. If this is excessive or left, mould and dampness can grow. We encourage our tenants to report this to us immediately to allow ourselves to investigate the matter. The cause of the problem will either be excessive condensation or a building defect/leak.

As part our inspection, we will carry out tests to establish the cause. If the dampness is caused by building defect or leaks, repairs

will be instructed to rectify the issue . If the dampness and mould is caused by excessive condensation, we will provide advice on how minimises this. If required, we may instruct the installation of extraction fans to help combat the situation. If you have any concerns regarding this please contact Stephen Dougherty, Property Services Officer, Direct Dial: 01786 431027 or e mail stephen.dougherty@forthha.org.uk for advice on dampness and mould.

Estate visits by your Housing Services Officer

Your Housing Services Officer will be carrying out estate visits during the month of May 2023



Elaine Shepherd will carry out estates visit during the **weeks commencing**

Monday 22nd & 29th May 2023 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 **weeks commencing**

Monday 8th & 15th May 2023 to the following areas:

Cornton, Causewayhead, Barn Road, St. Ninians, Whins of Milton, Bannockburn, Fallin, Cowie, Plean.

If you have any issues or concerns about your estate, please contact your Housing Services Team on 01786 446 066.

Estate Management

Now the days are getting longer and we start to spend more time outdoors we want to ensure that the garden and communal areas are maintained in a safe, secure and pleasant environment.

Elaine & Kelly, your Housing Services Officers, carry out regular estate management visits in all our developments and monitor issues such as cleaning and repairs of communal areas, boundary issues, grounds maintenance, parking, and the general use of communal areas. They also capture individual gardens within this remit and our frequent visits/checks help maintain a high standard.

We can all do our bit by putting all rubbish in the appropriate bins, tidying

toys and bikes away at the end of the day and arranging for larger unwanted items to be uplifted or taken to the local recycling centre at Polmaise. It's a good idea to let us know that you have arranged an uplift as failing to do so can result in the items being uplifted by Forth at a charge to you.

Keeping gardens and communal areas litter and clutter free means everyone can enjoy the garden areas and also allows for our contractors to maintain these garden areas. Those lucky enough to have exclusive use of a garden area must take reasonable care to keep it from becoming overgrown or untidy. Please bear in mind that not maintaining your garden can affect your neighbours enjoyment of their home also.

Special uplifts can be arranged via Stirling Council. The easiest way to arrange a collection is to call **01786 404040** and select the 'waste services' option. The lines are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

You can also arrange a collection in person by visiting:

Customer First
1-5 Port Street
Stirling
FK8 2EJ

Details of what can be arranged for uplift and other useful information can be found here. <https://www.stirling.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/special-uplifts/>

If you have any concerns, please bring these to the attention of your Housing Services Officer.

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

We are again planning to hold 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 development.

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

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



SURVEY WINNERS

We are pleased to announce the following winners:

Rent Consultation
J MacKechnie, Fallin

Bathroom Survey
J McKail , Cowie

Joint Tenants Satisfaction Survey

Ms Stewart
Whins of Milton

Mrs Arthur
Cornton

Food Train – Stirling for Over 65s

– Do You Need A Hand With Shopping?

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?

- Customers complete a blank shopping list which is collected by

their volunteers; a blank shopping list is left with each customer for next time.

- Shopping is completed and delivered by their volunteers at local shops on a nominated day and delivered.
- 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 £5 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.
- £5 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 the foodtrain.co.uk**, or if you'd like to speak to someone please Tel: 01786 450536.



Cats Protection's £5 neutering campaign and community work in Forth Valley

Cats Protection is the UK's largest feline welfare charity and their Community Engagement team have been working in the Forth Valley area to inform and educate local communities about cat welfare and the importance of neutering.

If you live in the FK postcode area you may be eligible for Cats Protection's current neutering and microchipping campaign where you can get your pet cat neutered and microchipped for £5. Eligibility criteria include having a low household income, receiving means tested benefits, being a full-time student or pensioner.

Benefits of getting your cat neutered include:

- Prevents males from getting female cats pregnant.
- Prevents females from getting pregnant and having unplanned pregnancies.
- Reduced fighting injuries and vet bills.
- Reduced spraying and wailing.
- Reduced risk of cancers and other diseases through mating.
- Less likely to roam, get lost or injured on roads.

The campaign includes the opportunity to get your cat microchipped also for £5.

Microchipping can help reunite you with your cat should it ever go missing

The team is helping cat owners across Forth Valley learn about cat welfare and helping them to get their cats neutered and microchipped, providing cat carriers and transport to the vet appointment if needed.

To get help with the £5 campaign or to report stray and feral cats, please contact Yvette on: 07392864000 or by email:

Yvette.malone@cats.org.uk

Cats Protection's local community neutering work can also be found via social media @NeuterYourCatScotland

For more information about Cats Protection's Community Outreach programme <https://www.cats.org.uk/what-we-do/neutering/cno>



Easter Word Search

Complete Our Easter Wordsearch and return by **Monday 24th April 2023** to our offices.

Children 12 and under can enter our competition to win a CHOCOLATE EGG by completing our word search and returning with your name, age and address to:

**Forth Housing Association,
146 Drip Road, Stirling, FK8 1RW**

BUNNY

EGGS

CHICK

JELLYBEAN

BASKET

SPRING

FLOWER

EASTER

GRASS

CANDY

HUNT

BONNET

SUNDAY

LAMB

**WIN A
CHOCOLATE
EGG**

Y T L
Y P H S H Y
H S S A R G E
Y R Y I H I R H Y
H H D R E T S A E H Q
U N S P R I N G I R H
B N I A A L D L A S I R B
C T S L C H I C K A S I C
J E L L Y B E A N L A S F
R E W O L F B F N R L U A
R S T F E A M T E R R N J
U A E P P B A S K E T D U
T R N B B L L S B P F A O
B U N N Y U S A L E P Y Z
P U O G S A A R S E B O P
T B N A R P K A P L B
B S E E K E G G S S L
A T Y U E T K R
Y D N A C U
T B S M

NAME: _____

AGE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Forth is Now On Facebook – why not follow us?

We are always looking for new ways to engage with our customers. Therefore, a lot of our information is now on Facebook as well as our website. As well as general news we will also be posting important updates. So why not have a look at our page and become one

of our many followers? For more information, please contact Becky Ramage or Callum MacDougall at the office Tel 01786 446066. See link below:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100087155622546>

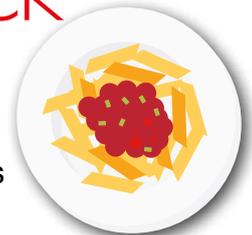
Shop Smart, Cook Clever – You Could Feed Your Family for £20 per week

With the current cost of living crisis budgeting, saving money and meal planning has never been more important.

If you are on Facebook why not have a look at this page:

<https://www.facebook.com/fyf20quid>

It has lots of information on ways to meal plan, budget and cook homemade food for your families.



Useful Contact Details...

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