



NEWSletter

GLASGOW WEST HOUSING ASSOCIATION

WINTER SECURITY

With Christmas looming and opportunistic thieves on the prowl, the security of your home and that of your neighbours is of paramount importance. Don't give thieves a chance...

- Always lock windows and doors when you go out, even if its only for a few minutes
- Make sure tools or ladders, that a burglar could use to get in, are securely locked away
- Never leave keys in a secret place – thieves usually find them
- It gets dark around 4pm in winter... remember to leave a light on if you are out at night
- Don't leave notes on the door saying you are out
- Never leave valuables lying around where they can be seen through a window
- Make sure the controlled entry door is kept shut and locked at all times and only allow a caller into the building if they are coming to see you.

For further information, contact the Crime Prevention Officer at your local police station.

Home Contents Insurance

If your home contents are not insured, consider the Diamond Insurance Scheme. Application Forms are available from our offices or by contacting Diamond Insurance direct on 0845 601 6006 (local rate number).

BIG FREEZE INFORMATION

During cold weather, you can avoid frost damage and burst pipes by following the steps below:

- Set the thermostat on your central heating to at least 10c (50f)
- Leave the doors in each room open as this allows warm air to circulate around your home

If you have a burst pipe.....

- Phone emergency telephone numbers: see calendar or office answerphone
- Turn off stops cocks: if you are unsure where Stop Cocks are situated telephone the Association and staff will advise
- If water is in contact with any electrical fittings: Turn off the power at the mains

If you are going away over the Christmas holidays, please inform the Association and, if possible, leave an Emergency Contact Number.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEWYEAR

From the Committee and Staff of Glasgow West Housing Association

Our office will close at 4pm on Friday, 22nd December 2006 and will re-open to the public at 9.00 am on Monday, 8th January 2007.

The office will be closed for a half day only from 12:30 pm on Friday, 8th December.

Emergency telephone numbers are noted in the Calendar delivered with this Newsletter and also on the answer-phone.

ANNUAL TENANTS CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, 27 JANUARY 2007

Our Annual Tenants Conference (ATC) will be held in the Mitchell Library. Light refreshments and sandwiches will be provided. If you require transport and or creche facilities, please let us know by 20th January.

At the ATC we will be consulting with you on the rent increase for 2007/08 and more information about this is included in the leaflet delivered with this Newsletter.

Please come along to the ATC and share your ideas and opinions with us, and help determine the priorities for 2007/08.

We look forward to seeing some 'new faces' as well as all our 'regulars.'

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR?

Do you like the style/format of this Christmas Newsletter and Calendar or do you prefer the old styles?

We have introduced some changes following comments received from you in the recent Satisfaction Survey.

Please drop us a note to let us know what you think, contact Lesley at the office or tell a member of staff the next time you speak with them. Alternatively, come along to our Annual Tenants Conference in January.

Your views do count.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS COMPETITIONS

The Christmas competition is enclosed.

Prizes include gift vouchers and selection boxes. Entrants should be no older than 11 years old and remember to fill in your name and address and post/hand in entries to the Association's office by Monday 18th December 2006.

RENT REWARD SCHEME

Annual bonus cheques for up to £50 will be issued mid-December to all Members who qualify.

The Christmas draw will take place on Tuesday 12th December at our offices. First prize is a fabulous Christmas Hamper which will be delivered to the winner by the 15th of the month.

Thank you to all our Members for their continued support and commitment to the Scheme and good luck to you all in the Christmas Draw.

If you are not a Member of this Scheme and would like to know a bit more about the excellent benefits and incentives available to Members, please contact the office.

STAFF DIRECT DIAL NUMBERS

Tenancy Services

Allocations/General Enquiries	Lauren Connelly	0141 331 6651
Tenancy Issues Area 1	Elaine Giles	0141 331 6660
Tenancy Issues Area 2	Jennie Dunk	0141 331 6658
Estate Management	Jean Fernand	0141 331 6672
Hyndland LHO (GHA)	Tracy Sloan	0141 331 6653

Property Services

Report Repairs	Pat Coll	0141 331 6652
Maintenance Enquiries	Richard O'Brien	0141 331 6659

Business Facilities

General Enquiries	Caroline Mills	0141 331 6650
Factoring Issues	June Brown	0141 331 6663
Membership Enquiries	Lesley Gillespie	0141 331 6664
Accounts	Iain Nicholl	0141 331 6654

Area 1

Elaine Giles
Argyle Street 1010 up
Athole Gardens
Bank Street
Belmont Street
Berkeley Street
152 -238
Brechin Street
Byres Road
Colebrooke St
Derby Street
Hillhead Street
Kelvingrove St
Kew Terrace
St Vincent Cresc.
University Avenue
University Place

Area 2

Jennie Dunk
Argyle Street to 980
Beltane Street
Berkeley Street to
104 – 152
Breadalbane St
Burnbank Gdns
Burnbank Terr
Claremont St
Cleveland St
Dorset Street
Dover Street
Elderslie Street
Kent Road
McIntyre Street
Napiershall Street
North Woodside Rd
Pembroke Street
St Vincent Street

5 ROYAL CRESCENT GLASGOW G3 7SL TEL: 0141 331 6650 • FAX: 0141 331 6679
EMAIL: admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk WEBSITE: www.gwha.org.uk
Registered as a Scottish Charity

ARGYLE ADVICE PROJECT

The Argyle Advice Project, a new welfare rights service shared between several housing associations in the west end, was launched at the start of October and is already keeping busy.

So far we have seen over 80 people and dealt with a wide range of matters, from Attendance Allowance to Working Tax Credit. Our target is to make sure every resident has a benefit check and receives their maximum entitlement.

Many people find that answering a few questions about money and circumstances can reveal they have been missing out on something. We can arrange appointments here at the office at 5 Royal Crescent, or if you cannot get out, home visits. The service is free of charge and completely confidential. If you have any questions about benefits or credits, or need assistance with filling in forms, please contact us.

The direct contact number is 0141 331 6665 or you can e-mail advice@glasgowwestha.co.uk.

WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS

If you are aged 60 or over in the week beginning 18/09/2006, you are entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment. This is a lump-sum of £200 per single person or couple aged 60-79, or £300 if you are over 80.

If you receive Retirement Pension or other social security benefits, you should automatically receive your payment. Otherwise, you must make a claim before the end of March 2007.

If you have any enquiries, contact the Winter Fuel Helpline on 08459 151 515, and if there are problems getting a payment, please contact us.

STAFF UPDATE

We would like to welcome on board Lauren Connolly who will be taking over from Alun Poston in the position of Tenancy Services Administrator. We would like to wish Alun all the very best for the future.

CHANGES AND TAX CREDITS

From 1st November 2006, there are new rules that mean there are more occasions when you must inform the Tax Credit office of changes in your circumstances. These are:

- changes in the number of hours you usually work and this takes you below the 16 hours a week or 30 hours a week thresholds;
- if you cease to be responsible for a child or young person, for example where a child or young person leaves home; and
- a child or young person ceases to qualify for support, for example a young person leaves non-advanced full time education or approved training.

If you become aware of such a change, this must be notified to the Tax Credit Office within three months (within one month from April 2007). You can contact the Tax Credit Office on 0845 300 3900 – however, it is wise to notify changes in writing and to get advice, so please contact us first.

GWHA LITERACY PROJECT

PLEASE ENSURE YOUR CHILD IS REGISTERED NOW!!



As part of our wider role in the community, we will be promoting life-long learning for children through the launch of our Literacy Project in January 2007.

The Project will aim to provide GWHA children with a book on or around their birthday date. Children from birth to aged 12 years will be included in the Project, although we will be delighted to extend this to older children on request.

This project has been made possible through our Community Fund, which was set up from monies collected over the years by Staff and Committee participating in charitable/fund-raising events. Recently the Director donated a day's annual leave to the community fund; this was raffled amongst staff and raised £96.00. If you wish your child to be included in this exciting new project please check whether or not we have their details on record by contacting the office or by calling in at our Reception desk.

If you would like more information, please contact

JUNE BROWN - 0141 331 6663 TRACY SLOAN - 0141 331 6653 RICHARD O'BRIEN - 0141 331 6659

PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

Our Management Committee and Staff are fully committed to involving you in decisions about our services and activities and the various mechanisms for achieving this are outlined in our Participation Policy and Strategy, both of which are available from our offices.

In this Newsletter and at our Annual Tenants Conference we will report to you on our achievements during 2006/07 and we will ask you to consider proposals for the forthcoming year 2007/08. This is also the ideal opportunity for you to tell us about new or improved services you would like us to introduce.

Tenants have contributed in a number of ways over the last year, including:

- Deciding the rent increase level for 2006/07
- Reviewing the Rent Reward Scheme Membership Criteria
- Participating in the Service Satisfaction Survey
- Agreeing the introduction of independent continuous monitoring of satisfaction
- Agreeing the extension of the Close Painting cycle from 7 to 10 years
- Agreeing involvement in a Common Housing Register being set up in the North West of the City.
- Planning the layout and specification of new kitchens and bathrooms
- Choosing the paint colour for the redecoration of common close areas

Plans for 2007/08 will be a major feature of our Annual Tenants Conference in January where we will be consulting with you on the following:

- Rent increase for 2007/08
- Action Plan for the Service Satisfaction Survey
- Possibility of introducing a handy-person service
- Style and content of Newsletters

Please come along to the ATC to make sure your views are heard. If you can't manage along on the day, Avril Stewart or Elaine Travers will be happy to meet with you at another time to chat about our ideas.... or yours!

COMMITTEE TRAINING FORUM

Why is it that Glasgow West Housing Association is able to offer such a good quality flat at such a reasonable rent? Why is it that GWHA is working hard to maintain, and develop further, social housing under the current trend, political and social, towards owning one's own flat/house? These are the questions which led me to participate in the on-going committee training forum.

The training forum is informative, and I now know, though vague, the Scottish legal framework in which GWHA is operating. The forum is informal and down-to-earth, making it easy for the participants to raise their questions and opinions freely, without feeling any pressure not to do so. It is fun, as the participants have got to know each other very quickly through learning together. And it is a joy to make new friends, especially when they are living in the flats of the same housing association. I understand that GWHA has successfully organised Tenants meeting, in addition to AGM, but I am sure that the committee training forum is another effective means to make its governance democratic. Let's make your voice heard by joining a committee training forum.

Yushin Toda, Burnbank

If you would like more information about our Committee Training Forum, please contact Lesley at the office.

SERVICE CHARGES ADVANCE NOTICE OF INCREASE IN COSTS FOR 2007/08

If you receive staircleaning services, you will notice a small increase in the cost when rents/service charge review notices are issued in February 2007. This is the first increase applied by CAS for a number of years and has been necessary to reflect their increasing costs.

We consider the service provided by CAS is still very competitive and we will be working with them and with all other service contractors over the next year to help identify areas where savings could be made, without impacting on quality of service.

The Association pass on the exact cost of services to residents, with only a small additional sum applied to reflect the administration involved.

If you have any comments regarding service contractors, please contact Jean Fernand.

