



Clydesdale
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

WINTER 2021

The Staff and Management Committee of Clydesdale Housing Association would like to wish all our tenants, contractors and partners a joyous Christmas and a safe, happy and prosperous New Year.



We support our local foodbank

For the fifth year running CHA has donated Christmas-themed food, gifts and treats to Clydesdale food bank. In addition, this year we also made a £121 donation to support this good cause.

Our donation, which was warmly received, will help families and single people living in the Clydesdale area which includes Carluke, Law, Forth, Lanark, Biggar, Rigside, Douglas, Lesmahagow, Kirkmuirhill, Coalburn, Abington and all the surrounding rural areas and will go some way to providing them with essentials over the forthcoming holiday period.

Our new Chairperson Maggie Botham said: "I am pleased that CHA is in a position to support local charities, which share the aims and objectives of the association. We recognise and support the good intentions of Clydesdale Foodbank to alleviate food poverty."

She added: "As a registered charity, CHA shares many of the objectives that Clydesdale Foodbank pursues. We appreciate some of our tenants may be finding it difficult in the current financial environment and may seek assistance from the Foodbank. Our Association's staff are acutely aware of the difficulties confronting our tenants and families on low incomes, particularly at this time of year. We were delighted to help where we could by making these donations."

Need a Foodbank Referral?

We all hit a 'bump in the road' now and again and there's no shame in asking for a little help to get back on track.

Just give your Housing Officer a call on 01555 665316 and speak to them about getting a foodbank referral.

Annual General Meeting 2021: Outcomes

We held our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Wednesday, 1st September 2021 in Lanark Memorial Hall. Our Chairperson, Pauline Sandford gave her report on progress during the year, highlighting what had been a rewarding yet challenging year for the Association.

Our Annual Report features the Chairs report. We have also published the approved minutes from last year and Financial Statements for the year. These documents are only available online, but if you would like a printed copy sent to you, please contact our Corporate Services Team.

At the meeting four Management Committee Members stood down in accordance with the Association's Rules and all were re-elected. They were Hazel Galbraith, Catherine McClymont, Pauline Sandford and Brian McInally. Two Management Committee members had resigned during the year, leaving us with two Management Committee vacancies. Our recent recruitment drive for new Committee members had provided us with two candidates for Management Committee membership – Agne Zasinat and Gillian Anderson – both were duly elected at the AGM.

After 10 years as Chairperson Pauline Sandford officially stepped down at the Management Committee Meeting on the 29th of September. Maggie Botham was appointed new chair, while Pauline will remain as an Office Bearer in the role of Vice Chair Mentor.

Our new Office Bearers confirmed at Management Committee held on the 29th September 2021 are:

- Maggie Botham – Chairperson
- Hazel Galbraith – Vice Chairperson
- Pauline Sandford – Vice Chair Mentor
- Carmena Nixon – Secretary
- John Malone - Treasurer



Would you like to become a member of Clydesdale Housing Association?

We are always seeking shareholding members to ensure that we are representative of the people and areas we serve. Shareholding membership generates greater participation in the work of the organisation. Membership provides the opportunity to attend the AGM and vote for members of our Management Committee.

To join, you simply must complete a membership application form and pay £1. If approved by the Management Committee, you will receive a lifetime share in Clydesdale Housing Association.

If you would like more information about becoming a member, please contact our office to speak to Elizabeth Miller.

The minutes of our Management Committee meetings are available for you to view online at www.clydesdale-housing.org.uk/downloads/

A huge thank you to team CHA

Christmas is a joyous and happy occasion for most, however for some families, Christmas this year will be a struggle due to the challenging circumstances which they are facing. These families may have to rely on others in order to allow them to have a happy Festive period.

Vicky Rogers, Technical Services Manager said, 'Our staff were aware that some families may be struggling this year to buy toys and gifts for their children and wanted to help. We all agreed to collect and donate to a local charity, Kit for Kids Clydesdale.

She continued, 'Kit for Kids help families in the Clydesdale area who are struggling to provide their kids with basic items for big moments in their life such as starting school or nursery, a new house and at this time of year, they have a Christmas appeal to ensure that no child goes without. They reach out to the community for donations to help these families.'

When our Management Committee heard what our staff were looking to do, the Committee agreed to top up this amount to give a donation of £300.

This donation will help to brighten up Christmas for those families who are facing challenging circumstances right now, and once again thanks to our staff and Management Committee for their thoughtful donation.'





Be a Star Payer this Christmas

There is no doubt Christmas is an expensive time, with buying Christmas presents, sending cards and having that show stopping Christmas Tree

Don't forget to put paying rent at the top of your Christmas to do list!

If you are struggling to pay your rent, talk to us. Call your Housing Officer on 01555 665316

Fuel Bill rises and changing supplier – don't suffer alone



We know that fuel bills have risen everywhere and at the same time, through no fault of their own some people are faced with a new supplier. This is confusing and can lead for some people, to the distress of unaffordable or unpaid bills, as well as trying to sort out new suppliers and new deals.

Energy costs have increased across all fuel types with the traditional thinking that gas is cheaper than electricity

We can help

We have a partnership with the Wise Group (energy advice specialists) to provide tenants with individually tailored support to those in fuel debt, struggling with higher costs, and those who are simply confused by what is happening.

What is happening to fuel suppliers and prices?

Fuel prices have risen by up to 250% to the suppliers over the last 12 months. And due to fuel deals and the UK Government's price capping, this has meant that some small suppliers are taking in less money from customers than they have to pay out to the fuel companies. This is why they then go bust.

At the same time, where they can, fuel suppliers are passing on the increased cost, leaving customers who are on standard tariffs with bills that have risen way beyond inflation and wage increases.

On 1st October 2021, the Government cap on fuel prices was raised by 12% and this will mean those on a standard tariff will be paying an average of £139 more per year. Prepayment meter users could see an increase on average of £153 per year.

What can you do?

If your supplier has gone under then OFGEM, the UK Energy Regulator, has standard practices in place. This means you are automatically moved to another supplier and any credit you have with the old supplier is moved with your account. Sounds simple, but you need to take practical steps to ensure this transfer is as smooth as possible.

- Take regular screenshots or print your balance from your online account when any of the smaller suppliers “go bust” one of the first things they will do is shut down their website/app, so to keep up-to-date proof of balance could be useful if the companies cease trading.
- Don't panic, your supply will not be disrupted. We all get our gas and electricity from the national grid not our chosen companies they only bill us for energy used.
- Continue to top up prepayment or smart prepayment meters with the usual key/cards these will continue to work and add credit to your meters in the usual way.
- A new supplier will be appointed automatically by OFGEM. They will be in contact within a week normally to advise they are taking over. You can then ask them for best tariff and chose a payment method. The new supplier will be taking over hundreds of thousands of accounts at once, so they will take time to have all your details. Phoning them before they contact you will not speed up the process. They will contact you as soon as they are ready to finalise setting up your account.
- Continue to set aside money every week or month to ensure you can pay your bill to your new supplier when you are asked. Remember prices are going up for everyone, so you will need to set aside what you have been paying and allow for around 10% more, as a minimum.
- If you are on a low income and/or on certain means-tested benefits you may be eligible to apply for the Warm Home Discount you can get £140 off energy bills. If you are on guaranteed Pension Credit, this should be applied automatically.

In addition, Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments will help ensure those most vulnerable are better able to heat their homes over the colder months. The Wise Group will help apply on your behalf or show you how to for future years.

Our Top Tips for a Cosier Winter



Everyone wants a warm home without spending too much on their energy bills and with winter just around the corner, your housing association has teamed up with Home Energy Scotland to share some top tips to help keep you cosy for less.

1. Set your heating controls to manage the temperature of your home. Remember to use the weekday and weekend settings.
2. Keep your radiators clear and avoid putting furniture against them. Drying your washing on the radiator can make your house colder, and can also encourage condensation and mould growth. Never cover up the air vents of your storage heaters.
3. Your room thermostat should be set to the lowest comfortable temperature (typically between 18°C and 21°C) Turning down the room thermostat by one degree can save up to £55 a year.
4. Use heavier curtains during the winter months and make sure you close them when it gets dark to keep the heat in and the cold out. Make sure there is a gap of at least 15cm between the bottom of your curtains and the top of your heater.
5. Wash full loads of laundry using cold water. Today's modern detergents work great in cold water and about 90% of the energy used by clothes washer goes to water heating.
6. Replacing 5 of your homes most frequently used lights with energy saving light bulbs could save you around £100 a year (based on a two bed house).

Contacts and Websites:

How you're protected when energy firms collapse

UK gas supply explainer - GOV.UK

What happens if your energy supplier goes bust

Check if the energy price cap affects you

Warm Home Discount Scheme - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Cold Weather Payment - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

To contact The Wise Group call 0800 0929002 or email heat@thewisegroup.co.uk

Keeping You Safe

When you call us about a repair, or when we are organising work to your home, we will ask you questions about your current situation and whether you are self-isolating so we can understand how best to protect you and your family, as well as our staff member or contractor who will attend your home.

Please be patient with us while we ask these questions. These are required to protect the health and wellbeing of you, our staff and our contractors, which is essential in allowing us to maintain services.

When the staff member or contractor does attend your home, they will:

- Ask some further questions when they call you to arrange access
- Ask some further questions when at the front door of your property
- Wear appropriate PPE such as a face mask and gloves before entering your home
- Ask you to stay in another room while they carry out the repair to ensure appropriate social distancing is adhered to
- Ask you if they can wash their hands before and after the visit

We kindly ask you to minimise interaction with our staff and contractors whilst they are in your home. It is imperative that you stay in another room while they are in your home. All tradespeople will show you identification when they arrive at your home. When the works are complete, the tradespeople will advise you that they have finished and will see themselves out. By following these steps, we believe that we are minimising the risk of infection but still maintaining a first-class service.

We will be reviewing our working practices on a daily basis, in line with the latest government guidance, so the best way to keep up to date with us is to use the following means:



t: 01555 665316

e: mail@clydesdale-housing.org.uk

web: www.clydesdale-housing.org.uk

Or check our Facebook page:

[clydesdalehousingassociation](https://www.facebook.com/clydesdalehousingassociation)



Rent Increase Consultation



Each year our Management Committee considers how much rents will increase from the 28 March the following year.

In order for them to make that decision they need to get the views of as many of you, our tenants, as possible. Therefore as part of the annual rent consultation we have sent all of you a letter and newsletter advising you of the proposal and details of how this will impact on the weekly rent we charge you.

If this rent increase proposal was to go ahead, it would mean that from 28 March 2022 your rent would increase by 2% or 3.1%.

However, a final decision has yet to be reached so we will be in contact with you once this has been made.

In the meantime, please have your say on the proposal.

There are several ways you can have your say, you can:

- Complete the consultation form we sent you and return it to us in the pre-paid envelope provided
- Telephone us at 01555 665316
- Email us at mail@clydesdale-housing.org.uk
- Contact us using the on-line comments form at www.clydesdale-housing.org.uk/contact-us/

If you have any concerns about your rent, please do not hesitate to contact your Housing Officer on 01555 665316 or email us at mail@clydesdale-housing.org.uk or complete our on-line form at www.clydesdale-housing.org.uk/contact-us/

Talk to us about:

- Rent enquiries
- Housing Benefit
- Universal Credit
- General welfare benefit advice
- Allocations
- Housing list enquiries
- Estate issues
- Neighbour complaints
- Anti-social behaviour complaints
- General complaints

Pauline McMullan
Housing Officer

Telephone Pauline on: 01555 678947
E: pauline.mcmullan@clydesdale-housing.org.uk



Lisa Cochrane
Housing Officer

Telephone Lisa on: 01555 678945
E: lisa.cochrane@clydesdale-housing.org.uk



Jacqui Hart
Housing Officer

Telephone Jacqui on: 01555 678942
E: jacqueline.hart@clydesdale-housing.org.uk



Iain McMillan
Housing Officer

Telephone Iain on: 01555 678760
E: iain.mcmillan@clydesdale-housing.org.uk



Winter Gritting

As we are now in the coldest months of the year, we thought it best to remind all tenants of our winter maintenance plan and how best for you to stay safe in the cold weather.

- South Lanarkshire Council is responsible for the majority of roads and footpaths throughout the Clydesdale area, this includes a number of the our developments. These are commonly referred to as “adopted” areas
- We are responsible for all “non-adopted” areas within our estates
- We have installed grit bins in all of our non-adopted estates
- These grit bins have recently been replenished with grit
- We **do not** carry out any gritting on a reactive basis, i.e. at the request of tenants
- We **do not** grit on a preventative basis, i.e. in anticipation of snow/frost
- Tenants can use the grit provided to grit their own paths and common footpaths around their homes, if they wish and at their own risk
- Please let us know if the grit bin in your area needs filled again as the winter season progresses, and we will arrange to have this done.

We would ask all tenants to assess if they really need to leave their homes during freezing conditions and to only do if so if it is absolutely necessary, bearing in mind our gritting policy set out above.

Please keep warm this winter and stay safe.



Festive Period Repairs Service

When our offices are closed, our repairs service will be restricted to an emergency repairs service only. This means that from 12 noon on Friday 24th December 2021 until 9am on Thursday 6th January 2022, we will only respond where an emergency repair is needed.

What you can do to help

Before the office closes for the festive period please make sure:

- you can set and adjust your heating controls
- you can reset tripped circuit breakers
- you can get access to and turn off your water mains water stop valve
- you know how to check/top up your gas or electric pre-payment meter (where applicable)

Heating breakdowns can be a particular problem at this time of year if spare parts have to be sourced and suppliers are closed for the holidays. Please try to have at least one alternative heater available to use until a repair can be carried out.

Utilities firms should be contacted when mains supplies of electricity, gas or water are affected.

To report emergency repairs, call our out of hours service on 01555 435944

Governance Matters

We published our Annual Assurance Statement

All social landlords must submit an Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator providing assurance that the organisation complies with the relevant requirements of chapter 3 of the Regulator's Regulatory Framework. This includes regulatory requirements that apply to all social landlords and the Standards of Governance and Financial Management that apply to Registered Social Landlords.

Our Management Committee met on 27th October 2021 to consider our level of compliance with the Regulatory Framework. After due consideration of various sources of assurance, including an assessment report by an external consultant, the Management Committee concluded that we fully complied with the Framework.

Our Annual Assurance Statement was then submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator and is available to view on our website:

<https://directory.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk>



**Scottish Housing
Regulator**

Office Closure Details

Following the Scottish Government's announcement on the 7th December 2021 regarding the spread of the new COVID variant our Management Committee took the decision to close our office to the public and for staff to work from home until mid-January to help control the spread of the virus.

Our office and telephone opening hours over the festive period

Friday 24th December 2021	Our office will be closed. <i>Our phone lines will be open until 12 noon.</i>
Friday 24th December 2021 to Wednesday the 5th January 2022	Our office and phone lines will be closed.
Thursday 6th January 2022	Our office will be closed. <i>Our phone lines will be open from 9am</i>
<i>To report emergency repair when our phone lines are closed call our out of hours service on 01555 435944</i>	

**To pay your rent when our phone lines are closed
contact Allpay 0844 557 8321 or www.allpay.net**

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Smell of gas - Scottish Gas - 0800 111 999

No electricity supply - SP Energy Networks 0800 092 9290

No water supply/burst pipes - Scottish Water 0800 077 8778

Anti-Social Behaviour - South Lanarkshire Council 0800 389 1105

Out-of-hours Noise Team - South Lanarkshire Council 0800 24 20 24

Cleansing Services (refuse collection, wheelie bins, special uplifts) -

South Lanarkshire Council **www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk 0303 123 1020**

Environmental Services (pests, vermin)

South Lanarkshire Council **www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk 0303 123 1015**

Contact details:

Office Address: 39 North Vennel, Lanark ML11 7PT Tel: 01555 665316

Email: mail@clydesdale-housing.org.uk

Web: www.clydesdale-housing.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ClydesdaleHousingAssociation