

NEWSLETTER

WEST WHITLAWBURN HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE



Whitlawburn staff and volunteers: left to right; Stuart Borland, Helen Anderson, Muriel Alcorn, Andy Duffin, Anne Anderson, Stephanie McPeake

Photograph courtesy of Rutherglen Reformer

Whitlawburn Community Resource Centre

is Our Place

We are delighted to announce that Whitlawburn Community Resource Centre has been successful with the Big Lottery Our Place application for funding of £499,472 over the next 4 years.

The funding will allow for the external and internal refurbishment of the resource centre building and will also support the recruitment of 2 new posts to deliver our existing activities and services and to develop new activities as well.

Helen Anderson, Chairperson of Whitlawburn Community Resource Centre, said: "This is a fantastic outcome for the resource centre and the local community. The successful funding award has been as a result of a lot of hard work over the last 12

months and is the start of exciting times at Whitlawburn Community Resource Centre."

Big Lottery Fund Scotland Chair, Maureen McGinn, said: "I am delighted that Whitlawburn Community Resource Centre has been successful in securing a Big Lottery Fund grant. The funding will make a big difference where it is needed most and I wish the Whitlawburn Community Resource Centre every success as it goes on to develop and expand its project for the benefit of

Story continues on page 2

Story continued from front cover

their local community.”

The grant is part of the Lottery Our Place programme which was established to support local people to identify priorities for their area and produce a shared community vision statement.

Externally, the funding will be used to carry out roof works and cladding and timber repairs. Internally improvements will be



a general upgrade to update and improve the interior.

The centre provides a range of services and activities including financial inclusion support, an IT Hub, a household recycling project and food co-operative. There are also a range of groups that access the centre including foodbank, parent groups, youth groups, dance classes, exercise classes and football classes.

T&Cs Tenants and Committee...

Let's Communicate!

As part of the tenant satisfaction survey, tenants were asked about their preferred methods of communication by the Co-operative.

By far the most popular is the Newsletter, followed by letters on specific topics. As a result, we have revamped our Newsletter team to include representatives from all sections and Committee.

We would love your input to future issues of the Newsletter so that it has information you want to receive or share, so why not drop us a letter or email with your ideas?

What would you like to see included?

Money saving ideas? Celebrations? Photos? Information on anything specific? What else? Our top tenant contribution will win a prize!

We are delighted to announce the Festive Word search winners as Jack McLean, Lesley Gallagher and John Ford, each of whom received a £10 gift card.

There's a new competition in this edition. See the insert!





Pictured left to right are: Lauren holding Lexi, Sadie and Phil (Jnr).

www.4generationsinonetower.org

The Welsh family, of Bute Tower, are unique in a number of ways. Phil Welsh (who sadly passed away a few years ago), a founder member of WWHC, and our first Chairperson, would be so, so delighted to see his vision of community, and family connection, coming true.

Phil was a great advocate of community values and family connections underpinning any vibrant community.

And so it has come to pass... Amazingly, 4 generations of the Welsh family now reside in one tower block, Bute Tower.

Sadie, the matriarch of the family, her son Phil (Jnr), Phil's daughter Lauren,

Lauren's daughter Lexi, all stay in Bute Tower. This is probably a first in Scottish Housing.

Sadie said "It really is marvellous that we all stay so close. All we have to do to see each other is pop up or down the stairs to each other's flats. Phil (Snr) would have been delighted to see his dream come true when he, along with others, helped form WWHC back in 1989. It really is amazing."

Paul Farrell, Director of WWHC commented "We have always endeavoured to keep Phil's dream alive and it is wonderful to see it manifesting in this fashion. A true sense of community and family values".

WWHC - Charitable giving (December to March)

Every year Committee have a small budget to support local, national and international charities that it sees fit.

As is WWHC tradition, in December Committee spent £1,000 to buy 141 Tesco gift vouchers for our elderly members for Christmas, which were delivered before Christmas.

In February 2018 committee donated £76 to CHAS the children's hospices charity.

The Committee is happy to support local, national and international charities with modest donations. If you would like your group or a charity you support to be considered please contact Susan Paton on 0141 641 8628 or spaton@wwhc.org.uk



UC Universal
Credit

ARE YOU READY?

We are sure all our tenants are aware of the new DWP benefit called Universal Credit which is now being rolled out in South Lanarkshire.

We know that the transition to this benefit can be difficult for people as it means moving to monthly payments rather than weekly or fortnightly. It is also usual, when you receive Universal Credit, for any help with your rent to be paid directly to you rather than to the Co-operative. This means that you then need to arrange for your rent payments to be made to us.

If you are invited to make a claim for Universal Credit please contact a member of the housing management team to discuss your situation and we will help support you the best way we can until you receive your first payment.

Welcome Back to Jane.....and Goodbye to Alison

We welcome back Jane Murray to the Corporate Services team from her 6 month career break. Jane has had a fabulous time off getting to know her new grandson.

With Jane's return we have to say good bye to Alison Leabody who was covering Jane's reception role during her time off.

We will miss Alison, who from the start fitted right into the WWHC way of working, and we wish her every success in her future.

There's a new National Telephone Number

Regardless of your energy supplier, if there's a power cut, you can call Scottish Power Energy Networks 24 hours a day, 365 day a year.



Call **105**

Threats & Abuse towards WWHC Staff

Disgustingly, there have been numerous threats of violence and abuse directed at WWHC Concierge, Office & Community Resource Centre staff over recent months.

WWHC and CRC staff work extremely hard, often in very difficult and trying circumstances, to serve the West Whitlawburn Community, as best as we possibly can.

For staff then to be subject to threats of violence and abuse is nothing short of disgusting, and totally unacceptable. Whilst we accept dealing with the public can often be difficult, and we live in a volatile and often troubled society, such threats are shocking.

WWHC will take the strongest action possible, in conjunction with the Police, in circumstances whenever our staff are threatened or abused.



Whilst most Tenant/Members have very amicable and positive relationships with our staff, there is a minority of residents whose behaviour is unacceptable.

We ask all Tenant/Members to positively support and respect our staff who work extremely hard on your behalf.

EVH Long Service Award

Muriel Alcorn was honoured with a long service award from Employers in Voluntary Housing for over 25 years service. Muriel was one of the first to join the committee and is now our longest serving committee member. She has been looking after tenant's money as the Treasurer for a considerable amount of time.

Much has changed at WWHC during this time, however her commitment to volunteering hasn't. EVH (Employers in Voluntary Housing) recognise the role of volunteer committee members who give their time to the service of their community.



Muriel receiving her award from Gordon Mason, Chair of EaVH.

Well done Muriel from all staff, tenants and committee of WWHC. Your commitment is really appreciated.



Whitlawburn



Community Resource Centre

Whitlawburn Hub

Whitlawburn Hub is a Digital Inclusion Project supporting members of the community giving access to online job searching, Universal Job Match, CV's, and cover letters, Universal Credit and benefit applications.

If you are looking at getting back into employment or wish to update your CV why not pop along?!!

Opening Times

Monday 10 am – 4 pm

Wednesday 10 am – 4 pm

Friday 10 am – 2 pm

For more information
contact Fiona on 0141 641 5005

Email: hub@whitlawburncrc.org.uk

Interview Techniques

Job Aspirations

Mock Interviews

Whitlawburn Job Club

Come along to the job club on **Wednesdays from 12 noon – 2 pm** Where you can seek advice on how to become more employable. Learn more about **online job applications** and **CVs**. Build your **confidence**

and **dress for success** through **mock interviews** and **interview techniques**.

There's also help with budgeting and managing your benefits.

CV Evaluations

Job Website Navigation

Confidence Building

No Smoking in Lifts, Foyers and Common Public Areas

We would like to remind tenants that the Lifts, Foyers and common public areas are NO SMOKING areas.

Thank you for your co-operation in not smoking within these areas and being considerate of your neighbours and visitors.

Scottish Fire and Rescue

Smoking and Fires

In Scotland, most fatal fires are started by smoking. You can cut the chances of this happening to you.

Put it out - right out! Cigarette ends can smoulder for ages if not put out properly.

Do

- > Stub cigarettes out properly in an ashtray – make sure there's no smoke
- > Pour water on cigar and cigarette ends before putting in a bin – ideally an outside bin

Never

- > Leave a cigarette, cigar or pipe unattended
- > Balance cigars or cigarettes on the edge of an ashtray or anything else – they can tip and fall as they burn away
- > Empty a pipe into a bin – the ember can still be very hot even if it's not smoking

Ashtrays

Using a proper ashtray is a good start to stopping fires from smoking.

- > Empty and clean your ashtray regularly
- > Douse with water before putting the contents of the ashtray in the bin
- > Empty into a metal bin outside if you can
- > Keep paper, wrappers and other rubbish that could catch light out of your ashtray

Alcohol and sleepiness

Many fires started by cigarettes happen to people who have also been drinking and are sleepy.

- > Take extra care if you've been drinking alcohol
- > Never smoke in bed
- > Don't smoke in your chair if you've been drinking or you're feeling sleepy
- > If you do feel sleepy, smoke outside, standing up or at a window or outside door.

For further useful information and leaflets please visit www.firescotland.gov.uk

Rubbish Chutes in Closes and on Landings

Some tenants have not been using the rubbish chutes correctly recently.

They should only be used to dispose of small items and small bags of rubbish.

In the multi storeys, large or bulky items can be placed in the cage area. In the low rise or new build, please contact South Lanarkshire Council Land Services on 0303 123 1020.

You should never put lit cigarettes or empty ashtrays down the chute unless you are sure all items are completely extinguished. Thank you.

Cellars

There are either individual or communal cellar areas in the towers and low rise closes.

These should never be used to store flammable items.

Staff will check these areas and if flammable items are being stored, we will contact you to remove them immediately.

You should check your storage area on a regular basis and if anything is missing you should report the matter to the police.

Improving our repairs

Over the last nine months we carried out 135 repair monitoring surveys with our tenant/members either face to face or by telephone to establish what you think about the repairs service provided. You said:

97.78% said that repairs were carried at the time arranged.	Repair satisfaction 94.08% were satisfied, with the majority being very satisfied with the repairs service provided.
"all repairs are done on time, contractors are very polite"	"Brand New"
"Very happy with the work carried out"	"Very well done quick and easy"
	"Everything done to good standards"

We will continue to carry out regular monitoring surveys over the coming months. We would ask if you are contacted that you take five minutes to complete the survey, as this gives us a valued insight into how you feel the service is performing and highlights any areas that we require to make improvements.

We also hold regular performance review meetings with our contractors to ensure continuous improvement on the service we deliver to our tenant/members.

Scottish Social Housing Charter

How are we doing during 2017/18?

Property

Quarter 3 (Oct to Dec 2017)

Reactive Repairs	Total Instructed	519
	Emergency	50
	Urgent	122
	Routine	347
% within Target	Emergency	97.96%
	Urgent	95.08%
	Routine	94.52%
Average Time to complete emergency repairs	Quarter 3 (Oct-Dec 2017)	2.3 Hours
	Scottish Average	5.1 Hours
Average No of Days to complete non-emergency repairs	Quarter 3 (Oct-Dec 2017)	2.9 Days
	Scottish Average	7.5 Days
Repairs Appointments Kept	Quarter 1 – Quarter 3 (Mar - Apr 2017)	Cumulative 95.60%
Landlords Annual Gas Safety Checks	Number of properties where a current safety certificate is required	101
	Number of properties with a current	101 - 100% complete

Housing Management

Turnover and Allocations

At the end of December 2017, there were 128 applicants on the housing list and 105 on the transfer list.

		2016/17	17/18 at Dec
The average time to re-let properties for the financial year was 24 days which is above our target of 21 days.	Number of re-lets	59	40
	Direct applications	51%	59%
We are currently working to reduce this re-let time to within target.	Transfers	13.5%	16%
	SLC referrals	35.5%	35%

Rent Collection and Arrears

By December this year we had collected 98.1% of the rent due. This is less than we collected last year. In 2016/17 we collected 98.8%

If you need any help or advice regarding your account or benefits please contact your Housing Officer.

This is particularly important if you have been invited to claim Universal Credit.

Arrears	2016/17	2017/18 at Dec
Current Tenants		
Target	4.0%	4.27%
Actual	4.35%	4.62%
Former Tenants		
Target	3.0%	4.2%
Actual	4.28%	4.72%

Estate Management

Housing Management and Concierge staff work closely together and with other agencies to resolve neighbour and estate difficulties as quickly as possible.

Concierge staff also manage the housing alarm service and respond to calls through the system. All officers are first aid trained. During the year to date, 9 of the housing alarm calls required emergency action.

	2016/17	2017/18 At Dec
Abandoned tenancies	7	7
Anti-social behaviour	4	5
Estate management	327	279
Concierge incident report	34	140
Housing alarm calls	189	161

Finance

Revenue Income and Expenditure April to December 2017

Revenue Income			Revenue Expenditure		
	Budget	Actual		Budget	Actual
Net Rents Receivable	2,264,774	2,285,288	Management Costs & Maintenance Overheads	1,403,738	1,331,953
Other Income	252,272	238,723	Planned Maintenance	113,798	65,807
Bank Interest Received	1,500	3,910	Reactive \ Voids	447,357	482,121
Grants Released	728,678	728,678	Property Depreciation	847,741	847,741
Grants Received	26,438	26,438	Other Costs	225,697	233,364
			Bad debt written off	13,169	13,169
			Private Finance Loan - Interest Payments	78,479	78,479
			Loss on Disposals of Fixed Assets	12,842	12,842
Totals	3,273,662	3,283,037		3,142,821	3,065,476
Summary			Budgeted Surplus		130,841
			Actual Surplus		217,561
			Variance \ Surplus		86,720

Rent Increase 2018/19

As you will know, after consultation with our tenant/members, the Co-operative's Management Committee agreed to increase our rent charges by 1.9% for 2018/19. Rent increase letters have now been issued to all tenants confirming their new charges. Any tenants paying by direct debit will also have received confirmation of their new payment amounts and dates.

The Co-operative's philosophy behind rent setting is to ensure the provision of the highest possible service levels at an affordable rent. This rent rise should, of course, be viewed in light of the fact that inflation is currently running at the rate of 3%. The WWHC rent rise is also lower than most, if not all, other Registered Social Landlords in Lanarkshire.

What do I need to do about my payments?

If you pay using your **rent card**, either by cash, online or by phone, you should increase your payments to cover your new charge. If you have a repayment plan in place please contact your housing officer to agree a new repayment level.

If you receive **Housing Benefit** to help pay your rent you do not need to do anything to change your claim.



We have advised South Lanarkshire Council of your new charge and they will update your claim. You will receive a new award letter confirming your entitlement and how much you need to pay towards your rent. If you pay your rent by **direct debit** and are in receipt of Housing Benefit, we will update your direct debit amount once we have received confirmation of your new Housing Benefit award.

If you are claiming **Universal Credit**, please contact us immediately as you may have to update your claim yourself by letting the DWP know your rent charge has changed. It is really important you do this on time as if you don't you may lose out on benefit. When you contact us we will be able to advise you on how to do this and confirm the information you need to give them.

Belmont House
57 Belmont Road
Cambuslang, G72 8PG
enquiries@wwhc.org.uk
www.wwhc.org.uk
t 0141 641 8628
f 0141 641 8028

A registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014
Registered with The Scottish Housing Regulator No. C3841
Registered Charity No. SC038737
VAT Registration No. 180223636

