

GOVANHILL NEWSLETTER



The Newsletter of Govanhill Housing Association

Winter 2023



Christmas Comes Early to Govanhill!

We were extremely excited to have Santa Claus drop by to deliver a few early gifts and meet children in Govanhill.

Association staff and the community had a wonderful time hosting Santa, with games, activities, and tasty food ushering in the spirit of the holiday season.

A big thank you to old Saint Nick for taking time out of his busy schedule to pay us a visit! We would also like to thank the staff at the Larkfield Centre for the use of their venue on a Sunday.



Thank you to our contractors Mears and John O'Conner for their donation of selection boxes.

Christmas and New Year Opening Times

The Association Offices will close for the festive period at **4pm on Friday the 22nd of December** and re-open at **9am on Thursday the 4th of January**.

If you need any assistance during this time, please phone one of our out of hours numbers below

Tenant Emergency Heating Repairs: City Technical Services on **0333 202 0708**

Tenants Health and Safety Emergency Internal Repairs: MEARS on **0203 5893140**

Other Emergency Repairs: Pointer Call Handling Service on **0141 552 8647**

For all other Emergencies call the Emergency Services:

Police, fire, ambulance **999**

Police (non-emergency) **101**

NHS 24 helpline **111**

Meet Sharon Flynn, our Interim Head of Tenancy Services

You may be aware that our Head of Tenancy Services Claire McGraw has just finished for a period of maternity leave. On behalf of all the staff and committee we wish Claire, her family, and her new arrival well.

The Association has appointed Sharon Flynn to fill her role during this period of absence. Sharon has nearly 40 years of experience within the Housing Association movement. Sharon started her career in housing through the youth training scheme (the equivalent of a modern apprenticeship) and worked

her way up to Head of Housing at Loretto Housing, where she worked for 28 years.

Since leaving Loretto, Sharon has worked in a wide variety of Associations across the sector on an interim or consultancy basis and brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the role. The Association is delighted to have her working with us through the challenges and opportunities in the coming year.



Pest Control: Steps you can Take to Reduce Your Risk

We know that some of our residents have issues with mice, rats, cockroaches, and bedbugs. If you are dealing with these issues, please contact Glasgow City Council either online or using the My Glasgow App. Alternatively you can call 0141 287 1059.



Lower your Risk of Infestation Issues this Christmas

- Store food in closed containers and away from the floor where possible.
- Keep surfaces clean.
- Take steps to reduce clutter in your home. This gives unwanted visitors fewer hiding places. Homes with less clutter are also easier to treat should infestation become a problem.
- Avoid taking furniture in from the street, do not let your children play on furniture lying on the street or in back courts.
- If you buy secondhand furniture, inspect it thoroughly for signs of bed bugs.
- Do not leave food in common areas as this attracts pests



Taking Action for Equality

What the Association is Doing to Improve Equalities Outcomes

The Association has recently renewed its commitment to combatting inequality through its updated Equality and Diversity policy which can be found in the downloads section of our website.

Why Equality and Diversity?

We know that Govanhill, and our community, face significant challenges when it comes to equality and inclusion. We have a vibrant and ethnically diverse community which is unparalleled in any other Scottish neighbourhood and we are proud to be part of addressing issues for our residents.

Govanhill has elements of inadequate or unsuitable housing, particularly in the private sector, and this can have significant impacts on life outcomes from health to education. At Govanhill Housing Association, we have been working to improve housing conditions whilst working with the available housing stock, most of which are traditional

tenement flats. This kind of housing is often not suited for disabled people or others with mobility issues.

Other issues connected to inequality are present in Govanhill such as widespread poverty, we have services available for tenants to ensure financial well-being.

It is the Law

As part of our Vision and Values as well as the General Equality Duty, the Human Rights Act, and our obligations as part of the Scottish Social Housing Charter we work towards advancing Equality.

What are some Actions the Association is taking?

This list is not exhaustive, improving equalities is something that runs through everything we do. This list provides a selection of concrete actions that we take to ensure our commitment to promoting equality is met.

- **Promote the availability of our housing** to all sections of the community and maintain open access to our housing list.
- **Tailor our approach to service delivery, where needed**, to take account of customers' individual needs.
- **Take prompt action** to address all alleged instances of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.
- **All staff are trained on equality, diversity and inclusion** confidential, effective language and communication assistance

is available to customers who need this, either through our own staff who speak community languages or through our membership of the Happy to Translate scheme.

- **Tenants and applicants who wish to identify as something other than their birth sex can do so on our records.**

How can I find out more?

Our Equalities Policy is available at govanhillha.org/downloads but if you wish to be more involved with how the Association works towards improving equalities, through a focus group or tenant panel, contact Sharon Flynn at sflynn@govanhillha.org



Environmental Action Plan: Steps we are Taking to Improve our Community

We know that the local environment has areas of concern, and this has been highlighted by both residents and our staff. This is a key area that needs to be improved and this will involve several different agencies including Glasgow City Council and our contractors.

On 8th November 2023 we shared our draft Environmental Action plan with our newly formed Environmental Residents' Group who helped outline what needs to be achieved. We would like to thank all attendees for their time and suggestions.

Actions we are taking

- Releasing a series of videos highlighting tenant responsibility towards the environment



- Increasing enforcement on tenants who frequently fail to dispose adequately of their rubbish.
- Increased staff walkabouts and action plans in place for back courts
- Staff and community litter picks
- Close partnership work with Glasgow City Council, Public Health, and our contractors.

How you can help

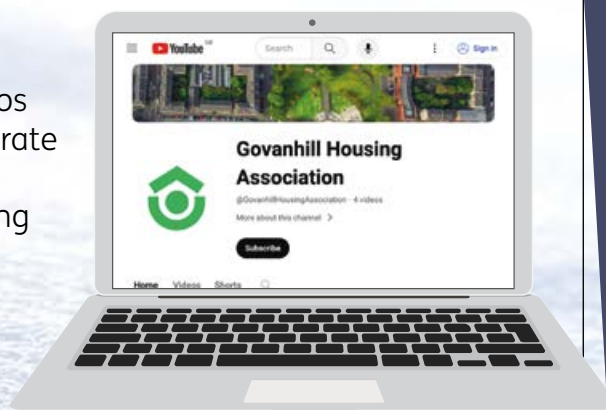
- Lead by example, and ensure you keep your back close as clear as possible
- Share our videos on social media to raise awareness
- Contact Glasgow City Council if you have any issues with missed bin collection
- Join our Environmental Action Group – contact **cchirilov@govanhillha.org** for more information.

Association Launches Youtube Channel

Govanhill Housing Association has launched a YouTube channel! You can find us over at youtube.com/@GovanhillHousingAssociation/videos.

We will use this channel for video content, from videos about how to separate waste for recycling to videos celebrating our upcoming 50th anniversary.

Be sure to follow and share!



Important! Housing List Review



We have begun a full review of our housing list. We have written to all applicants to ask whether they wish to remain on our housing list. We have over 2000 applicants. **If you have applied for a house move, you must respond to this letter.**

We will issue the first letter in early December, please keep an eye out for this.

Cost of Living Crisis: Where to go for help and support

Christmas can be a tough time for many, with added pressure to spend money on gifts and festive occasions compounding the very real challenges posed by the ongoing cost of living crisis.

If you are struggling please don't suffer in silence, there are places you can get help.

IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING TO PAY THE RENT

To speak to someone about your rent, including if you are having trouble paying your rent please phone

Avril White:

0141 636 3662

Lorraine Jennings:

0141 636 3672

Sandra Murray:

0141 433 2141

Make sure you claim everything you are entitled to by seeking advice from our welfare rights team. Please phone **0141 636 3686** or email **welfarerights@govanhillha.org**

IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH HEATING BILLS

Speak to your housing officer about accessing support including fuel vouchers.

OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT INCLUDE

Energy Advice Scotland

Free practical advice on energy related matters for the citizens of Scotland. Call them on **0808 196 8660**.

South Seeds

South Seeds can help if you find yourself with energy debt or if you're unable to top up your meters. Call **0141 636 3959** or come by the office at 514 Victoria Road.



ACCESS TO FOOD, HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND OTHER ESSENTIALS

People's Pantry

Affordable foodbank alternative based on 490 Cathcart Road. Offers affordable food and household supplies to members.



Al-Farooq Education and Community Centre

Local Mosque and community centre who also provide a foodbank 32-38 Dixon Avenue, **0141 433 2686**



Al-Khair Foundation

Local charity providing soup kitchen and foodbank.



Glasgow Southeast Foodbank:

Foodbank run by Trussell Trust
admin@glasgowse.org.uk • 07456 868628



Queen's Park Govanhill Parish Church Foodbank:

Fortnightly foodbank on Thursdays 10-12, 170 Queen's Drive, Glasgow G42 8QZ

The Sikh Food Bank

Food bank and daily free meals available at Glasgow Gurdwara, 37 Albert Drive



Central Mosque have a Poverty Relief project and offer food parcels every Sunday 1-3 pm.

1 Mosque Ave, Gorbals, Glasgow G5 9TA

Phone: 0141 429 3132

GENERAL HELP AND SUPPORT

Glasgow Helps

0141 276 1185

(9am - 5pm

Monday to Friday)

Glasgow Helps is a service set up to work directly with the people of Glasgow.

They offer free, confidential support, information, and advice for citizens on a wide range of issues including: Food Support, Employability, Mental Health, Physical Health, Fuel Support, Housing Issues and much more.



Rent Increase Consultation Coming in the New Year

It is the time of year when the Association begins the consultation with tenants on the level of rent increase being considered for the forthcoming financial year.

Everyone in the country, the Association included, is dealing with high inflation and other cost of living pressures brought about by the current economic crisis. The Management Committee is acutely aware of the difficulty of increasing

rents at a time when so many are facing financial hardship, and this will be reflected in the consultation.

At the same time, it is important to highlight that the Association is facing increases in several key areas, and we need to consider how we best cover these.

Last year we delivered a rent increase that was significantly below inflation, which represented a significant drop

in income for the Association at a time when our costs continued to rise.

The Management Committee, made up of residents, most of whom are Association tenants, met on the 13th December to decide what options to consult on. You will soon receive a letter from us detailing this proposed increase, and we hope you will take the time to read our proposals and complete the survey.

New Housing for Over 55s Coming Early 2024

We are pleased to be working with Link Housing Association to acquire 60 new homes for the community of Govanhill. These properties have been built by Link Housing and purchased by Govanhill Housing Association to add to our stock portfolio.

The majority of these properties are being allocated to applicants over the age of 55 to meet the conditions stipulated by the developer.

We expect the first tenants to move in early 2024.



For more information about this development please contact checkin@govanhillha.org

Video Doorbells! What do I Need to Know?

If you are considering installing, or if you already use a video doorbell in your home, you must think about data protection and privacy.

- If your video doorbell only captures images on your property, and does not record sound, you do not need to comply with Data Protection regulations (GDPR).
- If it captures images outside your garden or boundary such as your neighbour's garden, or any shared space such as a shared back court, or the street, then you need to comply with Data Protection Regulations. You will also need to comply if your doorbell records sound regardless of where this is.



Why comply with GDPR?

If you record images outside your boundary (or any sound) you will be regarded as a “controller” and will need to comply by data protection law when using your video doorbell.

Individuals who are concerned about your use of the video doorbell could ask for access to images, footage containing their images and sound recordings and make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) about you. This could result in you being fined.

How do I comply with GDPR?

- Let individuals know you have a video doorbell with appropriate signage, and make sure this stipulates that you are recording. Ensure the camera only covers the minimum area necessary.
- Only keep the footage that you need and delete it regularly
- Respect the privacy of others by not posting on social media.
- Ensure that the footage you keep is secure and cannot be misused by other members of your household.



The Association has big plans for its 50th Anniversary Year!

As another New Year approaches, the Association is getting ready to celebrate its 50th Birthday.

To this end we have planned a calendar of events taking place across the year. There should be something for everyone. All activities will be advertised in the new year, so look out for your invitation!

Some of the highlights are

A daytime tea-dance

A big outdoor summer event for children and families.

Local events taking place in every patch

An AGM with a difference

We will also be looking at how we can continue to give back to the community through this celebration. A lot has changed in Govanhill since 1974.

There have been major improvements in housing in the area led by the hard work and dedication of the Association, its staff and committee, however, we know that many people continue to struggle with poverty and the ever-increasing cost of living.

We also know that there is still work to be done in our neighbourhood by ourselves and other agencies. As a result, during this year we will

renew our commitment to the community we serve in a variety of ways.



If you would like to get involved or have any suggestions, please contact lery@govanhillha.org.



Looking After your Home over the Festive Season

During the Christmas period it is important to look after your home as much as possible. While the Association office is closed, we will have an emergency service in place, but there are things you can do to keep your home safe, secure and comfortable.

Fire Safety

Candles, Christmas lights, extra cooking, alcohol; there are many ways that the festive season increases fire risk in the home. If you suspect that you have a fire in your property call 999 immediately.

10 ways to prevent fire in the home.

1. When cooking, Do not leave chip / food pans unattended.
2. Be careful not to overload electrical sockets.
3. Use chargers for devices (e.g. mobile phones, laptops etc) supplied by the manufacturer of the device. Cheap replacements have an increased risk of catching fire.
4. Unplug chargers when not in use - always unplug them overnight.
5. Never charge phones or tablets & place under a pillow or cushion. This causes the device to overheat and can pose a fire risk.
6. Close living room and kitchen doors at night. In the event of a fire this will help to hold back smoke and flames, giving you vital time to escape or call for help.
7. Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.
8. Keep portable heaters away from curtains and furniture. Only use the type with safety cut out which will turn them off if they should fall over.
9. Keep an eye on lit candles - they should be on a stable surface, away from flammable items e.g. curtains, and kept out of reach of children.
10. Never spray aerosols near an open flame or lit candle.

Tackling Mould and Damp: Protecting Your Home in Cold Weather

Winter and freezing weather conditions increase the risk of cold and damp becoming an issue in your property. However, there are steps you can take to protect your home.

Condensation

There are three factors which affect the amount of condensation a home produces:

- How much moisture is created by daily living activities.
- Temperature of the home and how cold or warm the air is.
- How well-ventilated the home is.

Dry clothes outside if you can. If drying inside, put them in the bathroom with the door closed and window open/fan on. Any tumble drier vents should go outside (unless it's self-condensing).

Keep furniture away from walls, particularly external walls to allow air to circulate around them. Allow room in wardrobes and cupboards for circulation.

Keep lids on pans when cooking, and don't allow kettles to boil for longer than you need to.

When bathing or cooking, use any extractor fans you have and open windows to remove

the excess moisture from the air. Keep the doors closed even after cooking or bathing is finished to stop moisture travelling through your home.

Very cold rooms encourage mould to grow. It's recommended that you don't allow the temperature in your home to fall below 14°C.

If have any ongoing damp, mould or condensation problems, please contact our Maintenance Team for assistance. Contact details repairs@govanhillha.org



Preventing Freezing Pipes and Other Boiler Issues

Frozen pipes can become a real problem in wintry weather. Here are some ways you can prevent this from happening when the cold kicks in.

- Try to keep your home at a minimum temperature, if possible, frost setting, or a recommended thermostat set to at least 7°C - even if you are not at home.
- It is worth turning your water off at the stopcock if you are not going to be home for more than a few days.
- Bleed your radiators -If your radiators are cold at the top but warm at the bottom, it

is likely that air has built up inside. This air can cause your boiler to work harder than it needs to. To combat this, you will want to bleed your radiators. Using a radiator key or flat screwdriver, slowly turn the radiator valve anti-clockwise placing a tea towel or small container below it to catch drips. You will hear a hissing sound as air escapes. Once water begins to dribble out, tighten the valve back up.

- Keep an eye on your boiler pressure. If it drops, Please contact City Technical Services for advice and assistance.





Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRS): What you Need to Know.

We are currently carrying out EICRs in the area. It is especially important that we have these carried out to ensure that you and your family are safe.

What is an EICR?

An EICR stands for Electrical Installation Condition Report. It is a report that documents the condition of the electrical installation within your home. The process involves a combination of inspection and testing to determine if the electrical installation is safe for continued use.

The purpose of an EICR is to ensure that electrical installations and wiring are checked by a competent person so that they remain in a safe condition. All electrical installations will degrade over time, so it is one of the easiest ways to detect issues early, reducing the risk of electrical fires and shocks

How long does it take?

The initial inspection should only take an hour or so but quite often we require to upgrade certain components within your system to ensure their continued safety. What we find will determine what further work is required. Sometimes in more complex cases we need a couple of visits to resolve.

There is nothing wrong with my system, do I need it inspected?

Yes, registered social landlords are required to inspect the electrical installation of all their homes every five years, irrespective if there are faults or not.

What do I have to do next?

If you receive a letter from us or are contacted by one of our contractors, make an appointment for them to come to your home and carry out the inspection. Ensure we can access your property when it is time for your appointment.

COLOUR ME IN!

Decorate your very own gingerbread house!

Send your completed designs to lely@govanhillha.org for inclusion on our Facebook page.

