

GOVANHILL NEWSLETTER



The Newsletter of Govanhill Housing Association

Autumn 2023



Association Elects New Chair at 49th AGM

On Thursday the 14th of September at the Elim Church the Association held its 49th Annual General Meeting. A full report, including details of the newly elected committee, and a letter from our Chair can be found on pages 2 and 3.

Contacting the Association

For all general enquiries email **checkin@govanhillha.org**

For suggestions email **suggestions@govanhillha.org**

For complaints email **complaints@govanhillha.org**

Repairs

Repairs For repairs during office hours please phone **0141 636 3669, 0141 636 3634 or 0141 636 3654**

Out of Hours Repairs

Internal Repairs – call MEARS on **02035893140**

City Technical Services
0333 202 0708 (24 hr)

Other Out of Hours Emergency Repairs – Pointer Call Handling Service **0141 552 8647**

Factoring

Email **FactoringTeam@govanhillha.org** or phone **0141 636 3666 or 0141 636 3673**

Housing Team

To contact any member of staff by email, please put their name in the subject heading and use **checkin@govanhillha.org**. A full list of phone numbers for our staff team can be found on the contact us section of our website.

AGM Report

On Thursday the 14th of September the Association held its Annual General Meeting at the Elim Church in Govanhill. All members were invited to attend, and sent a copy of the annual review, which is now available to read on our website at govanhillha.org.

During the meeting, acting Chair Cheryl Miller addressed members with a short update on Association activities over the last year. In her speech she reminded us that it has been a challenging 12 months, as the Association has navigated the cost-of-living crisis, and ongoing aftermath of the Covid -19 pandemic.

David Robb presented the Association finances. Following this the new committee was elected and our director John Quinn closed business.



Newly Elected Management Committee

Chair: Cheryl Miller

Vice Chair: Audrey Flanagan

Secretary: Elizabeth Klein

Treasurer: Keith Kintrea

Ghazala Hakeem

Wilma Logan

Iain Docherty

Jen Cassells

Barbara Robertson

Mujeeb Ur-Rehman

A Letter From Our New Chair Cheryl Miller

Earlier this year I took on the role of Chair when it became clear that John Mclardie would need to take a period of absence for medical reasons. I was then and remain, very aware that John leaves behind big shoes to fill.

Where it has been a privilege to take on this responsibility, and to be appointed to this position on a more official basis, it is with sadness that John has been unable to fulfil the role and will leave the Committee when his leave of absence ends later this month.

John joined the management committee in 2007 and has supported the Association through many significant changes ranging from the stock transfer of homes from Glasgow Housing Association (now Wheatly Group) to the Southwest Govanhill project to purchase and repair some of the area's worst housing stock. He has been a pillar of the community for decades and has made an invaluable contribution to both the Association and the wider Housing Association Movement through his involvement with other industry bodies such as EVH (Employers in Voluntary Housing) and the Glasgow West of Scotland Forum.

I want to take this opportunity, on behalf of the rest of the management committee, staff, and tenants of the Association, to thank John for his unwavering commitment to the Association, and the communities of Govanhill and Merrylee.

It has been a difficult year for the Association, not only losing John from the Committee, but also losing our colleague Debbie McInally, who passed away suddenly in June this year. A plaque has been placed in our remembrance garden, and we would ask that you keep her loved ones in your thoughts.



On a more positive note, we look forward to celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Association next year. We have a number of plans and wish to use the opportunity to connect with the community and give something back at a time when the cost-of-living crisis continues to make life difficult for many of our tenants. By marking the past, we will have an opportunity to look to the future, we hope you will join us in these celebrations. I look forward to seeing you there!

GOVANHILL HOUSING ASSOCIATION PREPARES FOR



Share your suggestions about how we should mark this significant birthday

During the 1950s and 1960s Glasgow city council enacted a policy of large-scale demolitions of slum housing. These demolitions moved many of Glasgow's working-class residents a new generation of council housing on the city's outer edges. Govanhill escaped the bulldozers, but the poor conditions that the council were attempting to eradicate remained in the area.

By the 1970s funding had been made available for communities to purchase and improve properties in 'housing action areas of improvement'. In 1974 a group of residents came together to

take advantage of this funding, and so Govanhill Housing Association was born.

The area has undeniably changed in the last 50 years. From a meeting in a tenement kitchen, the Association now owns 2,804 properties, factors a further 1500 private homes, and continues to be a force for community renewal and regeneration.

The Association are planning to mark this significant anniversary with a year of celebration, that remembers our history and looks forward to the challenges ahead.

To do this we need your help! Do you have ideas about how we should mark this significant occasion? Send them to suggestions@govanhillha.org or alternatively post them to freepost at better living.

Association Holds Events for New Tenants

On the 12th of October, the Association held two events for new tenants to support them to meet their neighbours and welcome them to Govanhill.

All tenants who have moved in since 2020 were invited, in recognition of the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic drastically reduced opportunities to meet with neighbours and the Association face to face.

Tenancy services staff were on hand to answer questions, and a light lunch was provided. Tenants were also asked to give their feedback on the Annual Assurance Statement which will be published by the 31st of October.



Housing Team to Visit Tenants in Their Homes

We plan to visit each of our tenants in their home every two years as part of our efforts to improve the service we provide as a landlord. These house visits are an opportunity for you to keep in touch with us and discuss any concerns you may have. Its also just a really good way to find out more about what's happening in the Association. It also gives us the chance to check that your home is not being used for anything that breaches your tenancy agreement and are kept in a good condition. Tenants will be contacted before the visit is due to take place to advise them of the date and time when we will be attending.

If you wish to speak about these visits, please contact the office and ask to speak to a member of the Tenancy Services Team.



Charter Report 2023

Our Homes

As of March 2023, we owned and managed 2,804 homes.

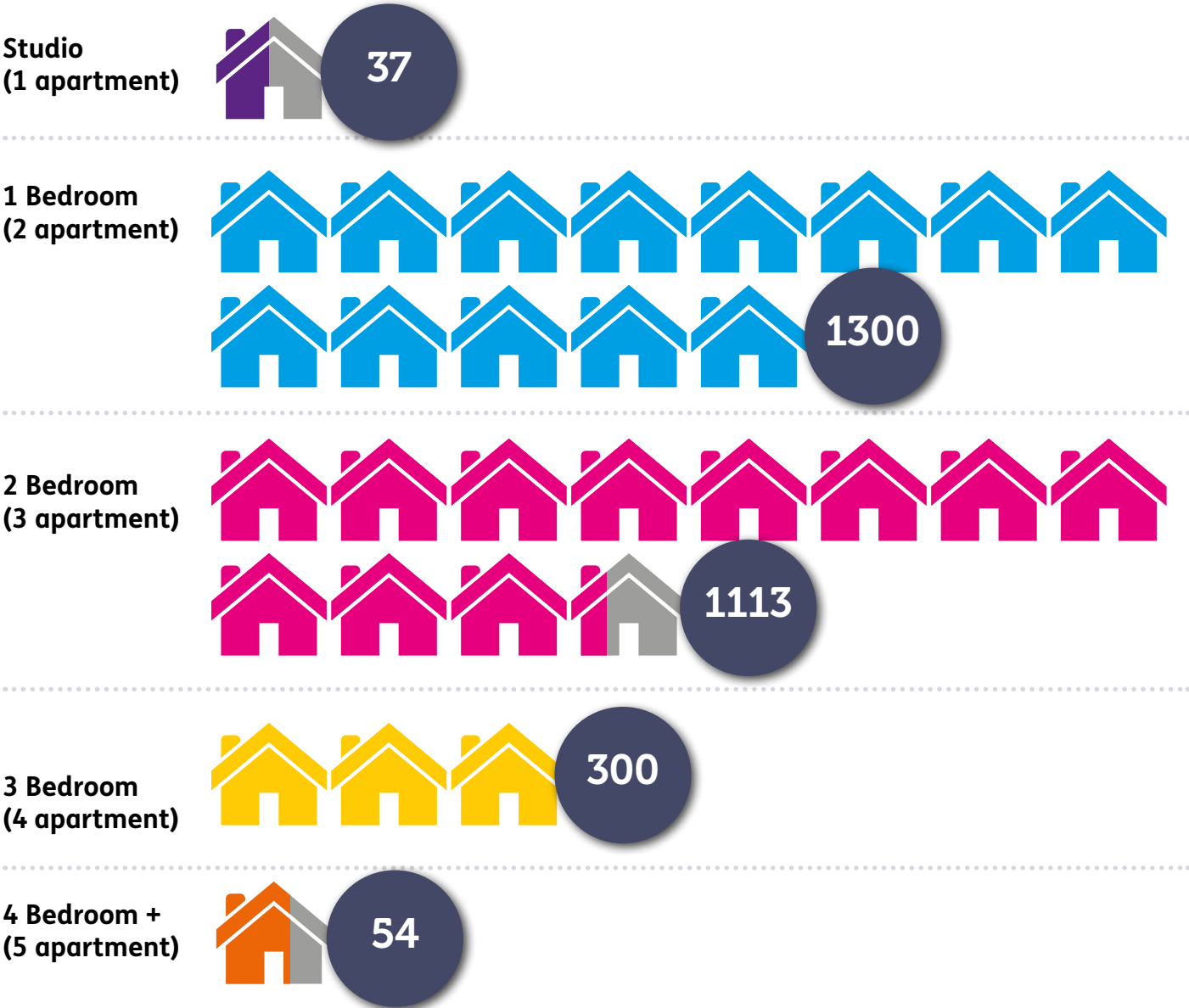
On average our rent increased by 6.75% in April 2023, which was below inflation figures for September 2022 when the consumer price index had risen to 10.1%, by December this figure was 10.5%.

In April 2022, the Association applied a rent increase of 3.6% which was also well below inflation, the CPI rate for April 2022 was 9.0%.

Keeping rents affordable whilst responding to elevated levels of inflation was a challenge for the Association in 2022/23. Rent increases below inflation represent a significant reduction in income for the Association and are not sustainable in the long term.

At the time of writing the Consumer Price Index is sitting at 6.7% (August 2023).

Number of properties owned by size



Our Rents

This table compares average rents across the Association with average rents at other similar Associations according to apartment size. Your individual rent may be higher or lower than this average and this could be the result of various factors relating to your own circumstances or the wider picture of our rents.

The Association recently implemented a rent restructure to make our system more consistent and easier to understand. Tenants were consulted on these changes, and detailed information was sent out at the time of implementation. If you would like more information about rent levels, please contact tenancy services.

| Size of Property | Govanhill HA | Southside HA | Cathcart and District HA | New Gorbals HA | Scottish Average |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1 Apartment | £76.59 | £73.03 | £66.42 | £61.13 | £78.26 |
| 2 Apartment | £88.80 | £86.16 | £74.69 | £83.29 | £83.46 |
| 3 Apartment | £96.04 | £91.12 | £86.71 | £93.05 | £86.28 |
| 4 Apartment | £112.02 | £112.24 | £98.71 | £103.67 | £93.96 |
| 5 Apartment or larger | £133.55 | £120.69 | £101.34 | £118.31 | £103.72 |

Rent Collection

We work hard to support tenants who have difficulty paying their rent.

Our Welfare Rights Team supported 479 new clients and opened 785 new benefit cases. This generated £2,271,770 in funds to support tenants in paying rent.

Of rent due 2.65% was in arrears in March 2023. There has been a steady improvement in rent collection over the last 3 years; in 2022 3.92% of rent was in arrears and in 2021 this figure was 5.2%.

This is also significantly better than the national picture, on 31 March 2023 social landlords had total arrears of 6.7% of total rent due; remarkably like the situation in 2022 when 6.8% of all rent was in arrears. The 2022 figure of 6.8% rent in arrears was the highest level of arrears reported in the ARC since the introduction of the Charter.



Customer satisfaction

The Association completed a large-scale Customer Satisfaction Survey in 2021. The events of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in particular the impact of lockdown, are likely to have had an impact on the results.

Our next customer satisfaction survey will take place later this year, and full results will be published in 2024.

| Tenant satisfaction with | overall service provided | % Tenants who feel landlord good at keeping them informed about services and decisions | quality of home | repairs service | landlord contribution to management of neighbourhood |
|---|--------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| Govanhill HA | 82.77% | 91.24% | 87.15% | 97.2% | 78.58% |
| Southside Housing Association | 84.2% | 93.3% | 77% | 70.99% | 92.51% |
| Cathcart & District Housing Association | 95.5% | 98.8% | - | - | - |
| New Gorbals Housing Association | 89.0% | 97.0% | 98.86 | 99.6% | 93.5% |
| Scottish Average | 86.7% | 89.7% | 85.4% | 88.0% | 85.1% |

Anti-Social Behaviour

In 2022/23 we had 144 reports of anti-social behaviour. In 2021/22 this figure was 142.

Percentage of Anti-Social Behaviour Cases Resolved

| Landlord Name | Govanhill HA | Southside HA | Cathcart and District HA | New Gorbals HA | Scottish Average |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Percentage of Antisocial Behaviour Cases Resolved | 78.5% | 99.5% | 100% | 88.6% | 94.2% |

Empty Homes

During the last year we let 182 properties to a mixture of waiting list tenants, homeless referrals and existing tenants looking for a transfer. This is broadly similar to the 188 properties let in 2021/22.

We work hard to minimize lost income through empty properties, and endeavor to re-allocate and relet homes as quickly as possible.

In 2022/23 the average number of days to relet a property was **61.35**, which is a slight increase on the 2021/22 figure, when the average number of days to relet a property was 55.9. The Scottish National Average for 2022/23 is 55.61 days.

We did not collect **2.3%** of rent due because homes were empty, which is higher than the Scottish average of 1.4%.

Repairs and Maintenance

Satisfaction with our repairs service has improved over the last year, 97.2% of tenants who had repairs or maintenance carried out were satisfied with the service they received, compared to the 85% in 2021/22. The

Scottish National average for satisfaction with repairs is 88%.

The time the Association and its contractors take to address repairs remains below the Scottish National average.

Time taken to Complete Emergency Repairs

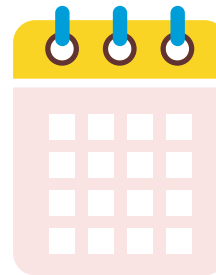
Govanhill Housing Association
2.4 hours



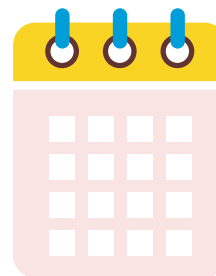
Scottish Average
4.2 hours



Time taken to Complete Non-Emergency Repairs



Govanhill Housing Association
7.4 days



Scottish Average
8.7 days

Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard is a Scottish Government measure which sets the minimum standard for properties in Scotland, it includes a set of five broad housing criteria which must all be met if the property is to pass SHQS All our properties are required to meet this standard if it is possible to do so.

Due to the age, construction, and layout of our properties we are unable to achieve this

standard fully. Where we fail to meet this standard due to the size of kitchens in some of our older properties which lack the required minimum storage, electrical sockets, and activity spaces.

Despite these limitations 63.6% of our properties meet this standard, the Scottish national average is 79%.

| Landlord Name | Govanhill HA | Southside HA | Cathcart and District HA | New Gorbals HA | Scottish Average |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Number of Properties Meeting the SHQS | 63.6% | 67.5% | 56.5% | 90.6% | 79.0% |

Complaints Figures

The Association works hard to provide the best possible service, but we do not always get it right. Our complaints process ensures we are notified when things have not worked the way they should, we always learn lessons from these complaints to ensure mistakes are not repeated.

| | 1st Stage | 2nd Stage |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Complaints received | 66 | 13 |
| Complaints carried forward from previous year | 1 | |
| Complaints escalated to stage 2 | 4 | |
| All complaints received and carried forward | 80 | |

Stage 1 complaints are more straightforward, where stage 2 require further investigation. Sometimes when a complaint is not resolved at stage 1 it is escalated to stage 2.

In 2022/23 there were 80 complaints, 67 of which were stage 1, 13 were stage 2 with a further 4 being escalated from stage 1 to stage 2.

Of the total complaints received in the year to date and where investigations are complete, 72.5% have been upheld or partially upheld (61.25% were Stage 1 complaints and 11.25% were Stage 2 complaints). This is a slight increase of 4.45% in comparison to last year, when 57.57% of all complaints received were upheld or partially upheld.

Maintenance services received the most complaints, which totalled 31. Together with

the contractor, the team worked tirelessly to complete the repairs on time. However, this was not always possible because of the pressure both the team and the contractors were under. We provided temporary solutions and followed up with the necessary work to ensure that the issues were resolved appropriately.

Tenancy services received the second highest number of complaints, which totalled 25. Most complaints received by tenancy services related to close and backcourt cleaning.

Factoring services received a total of 22 complaints. The nature of the factoring complaints varied, and were in relation to repair timescales, factoring charges, condition of back-courts and communication.

Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests



Thriving Places – Have Your Say About Improving Govanhill



Do you want to be involved in discussions about what would make Govanhill a better place to live?



GCDT (Govanhill Community Development Trust) are completing some work to create a locality plan for Govanhill by the end of March and we would love to have your input on how our neighbourhood and local services can be improved. We would love to hear your views. Please contact Dave Zabiega at dzabiega@govanhillha.org or on **07774 331969** if you would like to be involved.



Association Establishes Environmental Residents Group

Do you care about the environment? Are you interested in how we manage backcourts? Do you think we should work collectively to make a difference? Then why not join our newly established Environmental Residents Group!

The Environmental Residents Group is a community-driven group set up with the aim of promoting and producing new ways & ideas of how we can deal with the issues affecting the area. As part of this group we will put together an Action Plan that we will then share with all our residents.

Our next meeting will be held on 8th November at 6.30pm at our offices. Please let us know if you plan to attend.

The group is open to all residents who want to make a positive impact. If you are interested or would like more information, **please contact Cristina at cchiriliov@govanhillha.org**



Job Club

Opens its Doors for Local Residents

Govanhill Community Development Trust has opened a new job club to help local people get jobs and develop their skills. The new job club is open every Tuesday from 10-4 at the Larkfield Centre, 39 Inglefield St G42 7AY.

The Job Club is being run by Gill Scott, GCDT's Employability Worker. If you are unsure of where to begin or it has been a while since you have looked for work, you are especially welcome.



GCDT
GOVANHILL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Gill and colleagues from Job Centre Plus in Laurieston will be on hand to help local people with:

- » Finding and applying for jobs
- » Developing CVs and interview skills
- » Considering volunteering and work placements as routes to build skills
- » Identifying and finding ways to bridge skills gaps e.g., digital skills, literacy, numeracy, English
- » Coaching and support to build confidence

The service is a drop in from 10-4 on Tuesdays, so no appointment is necessary. It is hoped that the opening times of the job club will be increased in future.

As well as the weekly support through the job club, Gill is always available to help local people move closer to work. She can be contacted at gscott@govanhillha.org or on **07919 372488**.

A limited number of laptops and internet access are available to assist with activities.

The job club has been made possible with free room hire from our friends at the Larkfield Centre and we are very grateful to Anne Marie Millar and all the team there for their support.

Association Increases Engagement with Residents to Tackle Improper Disposal of Rubbish

In the coming weeks and months, you may notice an increased presence of our staff in the area. This is because we are undertaking a higher number of inspections in the closes and backcourts of our community.

These inspections are crucial to ensuring the overall condition of our shared spaces remains satisfactory and safe for everyone. If we discover any issues or unsatisfactory conditions during these inspections, we will take immediate action and engage with residents to address them promptly.

One specific concern that has come to our attention is the improper disposal of rubbish. Please remember that leaving bags of rubbish in the close or throwing out windows rather than placing them in the provided bins is not acceptable.



It not only affects the cleanliness of our community and is very dangerous but also creates potential health and safety hazards. We kindly ask that you dispose of your rubbish correctly in the designated bins.

For bin collection issues, please contact GCC (Glasgow City Council) on 0141 287 2000 or report problems through the following link
<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/contactus>

Join our Allocations Policy Review Group!

Have your say on how we let Homes

The Association is reviewing its Allocation Policy. This policy is important as it details our approach to letting properties and ensures that we keep fairness and customer service at the heart of everything we do. You can read our current policy online at govanhillha.org/downloads.

We are keen to hear your views on this policy and are looking to set up a group to review our approach to letting houses.

If you are interested in being part of this group please contact Claire McGraw at cmcgraw@govanhillha.org.

The Proposed changes we are looking to make are

- Single people and couples would be eligible for a 2 bed property.
- The age that children get their own bedroom to be lowered.
- Introduction of a group plus points system



Fireworks: Changes to the Law

Essential information about the law on using fireworks and pyrotechnics.

The Scottish Government has put in extra measures to prevent the misuse of fireworks and pyrotechnics in public places. These came into force earlier this year.

This means that:

Unless you have a 'reasonable excuse' or are exempt, it is against the law to have any firework or pyrotechnic other than category 1 fireworks (for example party poppers, novelty crackers and sparklers) in any public place including the street and parks.

Warning:

If you are found in possession of fireworks or pyrotechnics illegally you could get a prison sentence of up to 6 months, be fined up to £5,000 – or both.

If you are aware of the illegal use of fireworks, please call 101 to report it to your local police station. This is one of several changes to the law on the sale and use of fireworks in Scotland, as part of the **Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act 2022**. For more information consult the Scottish Government Website. **The Scottish Government - [gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot) (www.gov.scot)**

Well Kept Gardens and Neighbourliness Recognised by the Association

This year the Association has recognised 14 front and back gardens which were green, well-kept, and full of colour! Every winning resident in Govanhill and Merrylee will win £25 of supermarket vouchers.

Additionally, we have selected 7 residents to be recognised for their neighbourliness and commitment to making the communities of Merrylee and Govanhill a better place. Both will also receive £25 which can be spent at a local supermarket or online. Congratulations to all our winners!



Govanhill Community Remembrance Garden Nominated for Community Champion Award

We were delighted to hear that the group behind the community garden, and remembrance garden have been nominated for a community champion award by the Glasgow Evening Times.

The awards will be decided by a public vote which will be open from the 11th October to the 31st of October at www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/community-champion-awards/. Wishing them the very best of luck!



Children's Activity!

DESIGN YOUR OWN AUTUMN PUMPKIN!



Is your pumpkin happy and silly or weird and spooky? Get out your pens and pencils and show us your best pumpkin design. Send photos of your completed pumpkins to **lely@govanhillha.org** for a chance to be featured on the Govanhill Housing Association Facebook Page.