

# GOVANHILL NEWSLETTER



The Newsletter of Govanhill Housing Association

Summer 2021

## Govanhill Environment Special!



This Autumn COP26 is coming to Glasgow and with discussions taking place about the future of the planet a stone's throw away it is increasingly hard to ignore issues with our own environment here in Govanhill and Merrylee.

We have chosen to focus in this newsletter on improvements we can all make, whether that is getting involved in your local green spaces or taking action to lobby the council about changes to their bulk waste policy.

**Our vision at Govanhill Housing Association is that everyone in Govanhill and Merrylee should:**

- Enjoy good quality, warm, safe and affordable housing that contributes to their health and wellbeing and to community pride.
- Live in a neighbourhood that is clean and well cared for, with excellent neighbourhood services and opportunities for all.

A clean environment is a vital part of achieving this vision.

### Contacting the Association

For all general enquiries email [checkin@govanhillha.org](mailto:checkin@govanhillha.org)

#### Repairs

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

#### Out of Hours Emergency Repairs

Emergency Heating Repairs – City Technical Services on **0333 202 0708**

Out of Hours Health and Safety Emergency Internal Repairs – call MEARS on **02035893140**

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

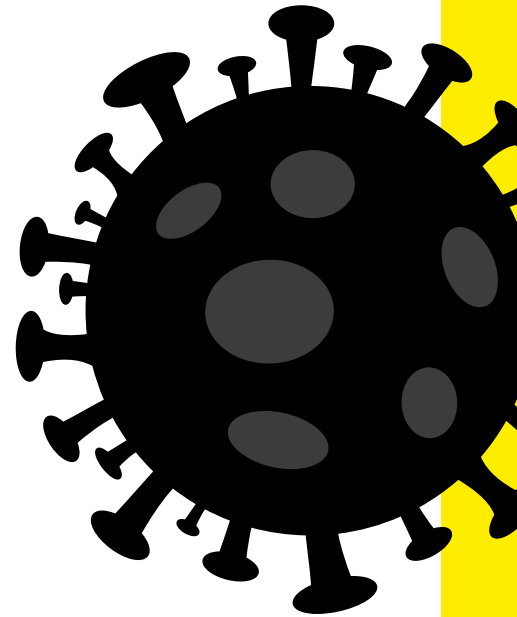
#### Factoring

Email [FactoringTeam@govanhillha.org](mailto: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](mailto:checkin@govanhillha.org). A full list of phone numbers for our staff team can be found on the contact us section of our website.

# COVID-19: What Beyond Level 0 means for Govanhill Housing Association



**On Monday the 9<sup>th</sup> of August most remaining COVID-19 restrictions were eased in Scotland in domestic settings. Although this is a welcome return to a more normal way of life, the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over.**

In announcing these changes, our local MSP (and First Minister) Nicola Sturgeon said

“Declaring freedom from, or victory over, this virus is in my view premature. The harm the virus can do, including through the impact of long Covid, should not be underestimated. And its ability to mutate may yet pose us real challenges.”

At Govanhill Housing Association the health and safety of our tenants and staff is our number one priority. We are proud that thus far we have not had a workplace outbreak of COVID-19, however we are also aware that this is largely the result of our rigorous approach to staff and customer safety.

In deciding how to operate in the coming months we are following Scottish Government guidance, and as an employer and owner of buildings members of the public come into, we must follow guidance from the Health & Safety Executive.

Scottish Government guidance states that:

‘We continue to advise home working where possible, recognising that some staff will start to return to offices in line with staff wellbeing discussions and business need.’

This means that:

- Our staff will continue to work from home, except for essential tasks. Our staff are contactable by phone and email, details can be found on the front of this newsletter.
- We will continue to run an appointment only service for essential face to face meetings such as sign ups and managing rent accounts. All other contact will take place over the phone or through email.
- We will continue to work in the community carrying out estate visits and dealing with repairs

Over the coming weeks we expect to expand our services and operations in accordance with this guidance.

As we continue to work within a climate of uncertainty, we very much appreciate the patience of all our customers, staff, and committee members.

# Rent Matters: Your Rent, Your Association



**The Association has recently received negative publicity because of our decision to take enforcement action due to long standing rent arrears.**

Govanhill Housing Association is a community-controlled Housing Association offering homes for social rent.

Every penny of your rent goes back into the Association to provide homes for the communities of Govanhill and Merrylee, homes that are provided for people, and not for profit. Without this rental income we would not be able to continue to provide housing, it is as simple as that.

The Association views eviction for non-payment of rent a last resort, but it can become necessary to ensure that we can continue to provide and maintain high quality housing.

Non-payment of rent has a direct impact on your neighbours, the Association cannot sustain major losses through arrears.

Before taking enforcement action our team will always engage with anyone who has rent arrears.

In doing so we offer the support of our welfare rights team, to make sure that you are in receipt of any benefits you are entitled to and to maximise your income.

Our rent team will set up a manageable repayment plan to support you to pay back any money owed. However, when we cannot contact tenants in arrears, or tenants refuse to engage with us, taking enforcement action becomes the only option.

This is something we take every effort to avoid.

So if you are struggling, please speak to us as soon as possible.

For welfare rights advice please phone **0141 636 3686** or email **welfarerights@govanhillha.org**

To discuss your rent account please contact a member of our rent team

**Sandra Murray: 0141 433 2141**

**If your Rent Officer is Sandra** and your arrears are **under £500** then please contact **Lesley McSkimming** in the first instance on **0141 636 3647**

**Avril White: 0141 636 3662**

**If your Rent Officer is Avril** and your arrears are **under £500** then please contact **0141 636 3653** in the first instance.

**Loraine Jennings: 0141 636 3672**

# Govanhill Enviro



## Changes to Glasgow City Council Bulk Waste Collection



Glasgow City Council have introduced charging for household bulk waste collections.

The fees for this service will be £35 for up to 10 standard items (a further £35 charge for each number up to 10 thereafter).

Large electrical items are charged at £35 per item.

To place a request, you should do so online by first registering with 'my account'. You can see full details on how to register at [www.glasgow.gov.uk](http://www.glasgow.gov.uk) Where possible residents can recycle bulky waste items. If you are unable to arrange a bulk collection online you can telephone **0141 287 9700**.

## Working Together for Govanhill and Merrylee: We Need Your Help!

**To achieve the vision of 'a neighbourhood that is clean and well cared for' we all need to do our part whether that is as an individual, or the Association or indeed Glasgow City Council.**

As residents it is vital, we dispose of our rubbish correctly and work together to maintain communal areas.

As an Association we ensure that our contractors deliver back court services and close cleaning as agreed.

Glasgow City Council are tasked to ensure refuse collection services both household rubbish and bulk items keep our environment clear of refuse.



# Document Special!

## Impact of Changes to Glasgow City Council Bulk Waste Policy on Residents

**We are aware that recent changes to refuse collection introduced by Glasgow City Council may have had a significant negative impact on our environment.**

We have received ongoing complaints from residents regarding failed collection of refuse and the problems this has caused. These include

- Overflowing bins – bags being put in the recycling bins when the green bins are full or being placed beside bins and these being burst open by “wildlife” and the contents scattered
- Contaminated bins not being emptied causing an ongoing shortage of bins
- Bins without lids being returned to backcourts by Cleansing
- Shortage of bins ie contaminated bins being removed and not replaced, or the wrong number of bins being returned to different backcourts
- Bins not being returned to designated spaces within the backcourt
- Uncollected bulk refuse.

## Taking Action

**If you have experienced any of these issues please report them to Glasgow City Council.**

You can either do this using the My Glasgow App

Or online at [www.glasgow.gov.uk/bulkywaste](http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/bulkywaste)

You can also report an incident by phoning **0141 287 1058**

If you find it difficult to make reports directly to GCC then please report the issue and the difficulty you have had registering your complaint directly to your local councillor.

## Contact your Local Councillor

**You may wish to inform your local councillor about any issues you are experiencing due to uncollected bulk refuse caused by the changes to bulk collection.**

You may also wish to ask what they are doing to ensure that the bulk refuse collection service is accessible and affordable to residents, and what they are doing to tackle the problems that have occurred following changes to services.

As an Association we have asked Glasgow City Council to notify their customers of the changes to their services. The reality is that there have been concerns about how these new bulk waste charges have been communicated. All residents of the City of Glasgow until recently had their bulk waste collected by their cleansing service at no additional cost. You may wish to ask your councillor what consultation took place before introducing charges for this service.



# Govanhill Enviro

Continued...

## Your Local Councillor Details

### Govanhill

**Councillor Alexander Belic**

0141 287 4610

[alexander.belic@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:alexander.belic@glasgow.gov.uk)

**Councillor Mhari Hunter**

0141 287 5372

07881 282 669

[mhairi.hunter@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:mhairi.hunter@glasgow.gov.uk)

**Bailie James Scanlon**

0141 287 7034

07729 299 906

[james.scanlon@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:james.scanlon@glasgow.gov.uk)

**Bailie Soryia Siddique**

0141 287 5625

07881 282 640

[soryia.siddique@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:soryia.siddique@glasgow.gov.uk)

### Merrylee

**Councillor Stephen Curran**

0141 287 4382

07900 134 416

[stephen.curran@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.curran@glasgow.gov.uk)

**Bailie Josephine Docherty**

0141 287 5854

07881 282 670

[josephine.docherty@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:josephine.docherty@glasgow.gov.uk)

**Bailie Kyle Thornton**

0141 287 5644

07747 118 694

[kyle.thornton@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:kyle.thornton@glasgow.gov.uk)

## The Impact of Bulk Waste Charges on the Association

**The Association has been working hard to mitigate any negative impact of the changes to Glasgow City Council Services, but this has a significant impact on our budgets.**

In the past we regularly brought bulk waste to the pavement for the council to collect at no additional charge to you. This has stopped

along with Glasgow City Council's new bulk waste arrangements.

It is unsustainable for us to use tenants' rent money to make up shortfalls in Council services. If we are expected to do so we will be given no choice but to increase rents and factoring charges further than is already required.



## Suspension of Garden Maintenance Service for Elderly and Vulnerable

**Glasgow City Council have also suspended their garden maintenance service for elderly and vulnerable people. In early August it was confirmed that this will not be re-instated this year.**

As with the changes to bulk uplift, this puts additional pressure on Housing Associations at a time when they are already stretched.

# nment Special!

## Responsibility as Residents

We understand that people are spending more time at home which in turn is increasing the amount of household waste in back courts and bin stores. Whilst the majority dispose of their rubbish responsibly, our staff have reported an increase in the volume of discarded bin bags in back courts.

We encourage all tenants to make full use of the blue and grey recycling bins provided by Glasgow City Council. This would help reduce the general waste bins overflowing unnecessarily and allow all household rubbish to be deposited correctly. We would be grateful if all tenants could recycle as much as possible at this time. More information on recycling can be found at <https://glasgow.gov.uk/recycling>



## Vermin: Suspension of Pest Control Service



Along with the bulk uplift and garden maintenance services, GCC suspended its pest control service at the start the pandemic which left customers with a limited statutory pest control service. At the same time, a number of our customers have experienced issues with vermin in their homes and in the vicinity and we have been working to address this. If you have a problem with rats or mice you should seek assistance from Glasgow City Council on 0141 287 1059.

### How can I limit the impact of vermin in my home?

- Place all general household rubbish in the bins provided.
- Ensure that any bulk waste is reported to GCC and only put out for collection on the day GCC advise it will be uplifted and then place it away from the general waste bins so there are no obstructions
- Keep rubbish bins in your home covered and empty them regularly.
- Ensure that surfaces in your kitchen are free from open food sources such as crumbs or spillages.
- Keep food in containers with tight-fitting lids.
- Inspect your home for potential vermin entry points and report these to us.
- Try to limit the clutter in your home.





# Annette Street is Blooming!

**Residents, including private renters and Housing Association tenants have joined together and drastically improved the front gardens on this once neglected street.**

Annie told us that she didn't know very much about gardening, and that the plants used were inexpensive and many had come from the local Lidl.

Oscar said 'I remember visiting Annette Street 10 years ago when my friend lived here, and it wasn't a great place to be. It has really changed now and it's looking great since the Housing Association took over so many of the properties.'



# Merrylee's coming up roses...

and crocosmia, photinia and festuca glauca...

*Kim Van Deere*

**During lockdown we've all had a bit more time to spend in our gardens, and some neighbours have come together to share knowledge and tools with a view to improving their outlook (otherwise known as their front gardens!)**

I had been an allotment gardener for 10 years when I moved to Merrylee with my own ornamental garden at the rear of the house. Merrylee is such a friendly area, and I would love to work with other local gardeners to help improve the front gardens of those with less green fingers.

I offered to work with neighbours Megan and Chris last summer to upgrade their small front garden with clumps of hardy plants such as alpines, sedum and winter fragrant plants like sarcococca hookeriana.

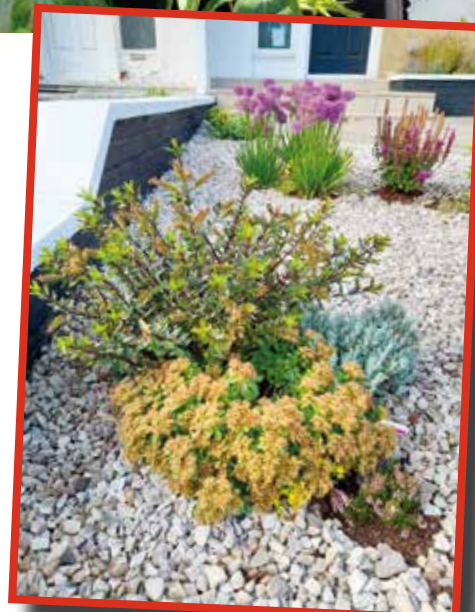
I am an experienced gardener and Royal Horticulture Society (RHS) member working on



a RHS gardening course (including elements of domestic garden design). Megan and Chris shared their ideas about the front bed and I suggested suitable plants and provided the expertise to plant up the new specimens using a weed proof membrane topped with ornamental stones.

I am also on the Merrylee Residents and Tenants' Organisation (MRTO) and we have recently put together an application to join the Keep Scotland Beautiful It's Your Neighbourhood Scheme. This year's theme is 'Climate and Nature Friendly'. We are meeting with our community gardening mentor at the end of the month and we actively welcome suggestions from interested residents for what improvements you would like to see made.

MRTO are looking for volunteers to get involved with improving the local environment. We are also keen



to hear from anyone with a garden or outlook that needs love and attention!

Please contact **[mrandto@gmail.com](mailto:mrandto@gmail.com)** to get involved.

This piece was written by Kim from the Merrylee Residents and Tenants Organisation. If you would like to write a piece about your area, contact **[lely@govanhillha.org](mailto:lely@govanhillha.org)**.

## Borrow, and Recycle Your Instruments with Music Broth



**During lockdown local organisation Music Broth have been delivering their musical instruments to your door from their shared community instrument library of reused and restored musical items. This has enabled many local people to benefit from access to musical instruments during a time which has placed restrictions on our activities.**

Founding Director Jen O'Brien says "Music Broth is Scotland's Musical Instrument Library, based right here in Govanhill. There is something for everyone at Music Broth. If you are interested in learning an instrument, being creative, or meeting others with shared interest we have affordable membership schemes for as little as £6 per month or £60 per year for individuals, or £12 per month or £120 for families of any size. We are still operating our zero-contact

'Musical Instrument To Your Door' delivery service too, no hassle or fuss!

Just sign up and reserve your instruments online on our website, where you can also find out about all our activities.

If you would like to join, donate old unused instruments in any condition, or just find out more about Music Broth charity (SC048299) check out our website, social media, or get in touch via email: **hello@musicbroth.org**, or tel: **0141 478 0799**.

Website: **<https://www.musicbroth.org/>**

Facebook: **<https://www.facebook.com/MusicBrothGlasgow/>**

Twitter: **@MusicBroth** **<https://twitter.com/MusicBroth>**

Instagram: **<https://www.instagram.com/musicbroth/>**



# Govanhill Pantry:

## Reducing Food Waste and Saving you Money

*The People's Pantry is a membership-led community food shop, part of Govanhill Baths Community Trust. Anyone who lives in the area can become a member of the Pantry for £3.50 a year, and can then do a weekly shop for £2.50, providing a minimum of £15 worth of food.*

*We spoke to Co-Ordinator Hannah for more information about how to join.*

We always have a range of fresh fruit and vegetables, a wide selection of dried goods, and toiletries and household items. We also have a range of chilled and frozen items, including yoghurt, butter, cheeses and meats, which vary week by week.

We recently installed some zero-waste dispensers filled with a range of spices and grains, so you can bring your own containers from home to be filled. We've also started growing some herbs and vegetables in planters next to the pantry, and are installing a hydroponic growing system in the next few weeks so we can grow fresh leafy greens all year round.

Unfortunately our membership places are currently full, but we are operating a waiting list. If you would like to be added to this, please either visit us at 488 Cathcart Road, G42 7BX, or email your name and contact



number to **peoplespantry@govanhillbaths.com** and we will be in touch as soon as a place becomes available.

As covid restrictions are changed we hope to be able to start signing up more

new members soon, and will also be holding some free workshops on growing and making at home. For more information please follow us on Facebook and Instagram **@govanhillpeoplespantry**.

# Meet the Management Committee: Jen Cassells



**‘I feel like if things need to change, then someone must step up.’**

*Environmental Manager Jen Cassells is the newest member of the Govanhill Housing Association Management Committee. We spoke to her about what made her join the committee, and her hopes for the future of Govanhill.*

## **Why did you join the Govanhill Housing Association Management Committee?**

I have lived here for 17 years; I am a bit of a transplant in Govanhill having originally grown up in the East End of Glasgow.

I got to know the Housing Association when they bought two of the properties in my stairwell as part of the Southwest Govanhill project.

At the time, a group of owners, including myself had got together to approach the voluntary repairs scheme to address some of the building's structural issues.

When the Housing Association took on factoring, they also offered to take this work on, and we have seen major progress since then.

I really like the approach of the Housing Association, not only about housing but also community development.

## **What changes would you like to see in Govanhill?**

I think we have already seen a big change in housing in the area as a result of the South West Govanhill Project but there is still work to do.

Having a safe secure home is pivotal to living a happy and fulfilling life, and the Housing Association is taking this agenda forward.

In terms of environmental change, environmental improvement in the area really needs to be co-ordinated. The Housing Association is not legally responsible for the rubbish or bulk waste removal, but as a landlord we do have a role to play because of our role in the community.

When it comes to bulk waste, we need a better and more robust solution. We are a densely populated community, so a lot of waste is generated in a small area. This waste must go somewhere, and if backcourts are inaccessible



or seen as unsafe then this waste may end up on streets. Many people don't have cars and are unable to take waste to Polmadie Recycling Centre – so the reasons for the bulk waste issues are complicated.

More work needs to be done on litter and it is the responsibility of everyone. Litter in the community has a massive impact, it chokes drains increasing potential for flooding.

It increases plastic in the environment which affects biodiversity in the area. Studies also show that litter on the streets affects the social perception of communities; with people believing the area to be less safe.

### **This is no small task...**

COP26 is coming to Glasgow, it is the most significant climate conference in the world at a moment where we are running out of time to take real action on climate change. The way we care for our local and city spaces is a visible example of our care for the environment.

However, when the great and the good of the world come to Glasgow in November – how will our littered streets be perceived by our guests?

We need to get beyond our judgement and anger and use that as a basis for change. It needs to be a community effort. I would love to see that.

Govanhill residents are great at pushing back against myths in the area, and there is a real pride here. We could direct that pride. If we are proud, let us be better on litter.

### **Support your Environment by Getting Involved in the Association!**

Getting involved with the Association is one way you can affect change where you live – whether that is by getting involved in the community garden, joining the management committee or being consulted on Association policy. If you would like to get more involved contact **[Jferguson@govanhillha.org](mailto:Jferguson@govanhillha.org)**

# **Good Neighbour Nominations are Open!**

**Would you like to nominate someone who has been a good neighbour over the past year?**

Someone who did your shopping when you had to isolate? Someone who has kept your spirits up over the phone?

Someone who has made a positive difference by tidying up or doing a bit of gardening in the back court?

Someone who picks up litter in your street?

Email your nominations, along with a brief description of why they should be recognised to **[checkin@govanhillha.org](mailto:checkin@govanhillha.org)** with the words 'Good Neighbour' in the heading. **Deadline for entries 30th September.**



# SHAPING GOVANHILL OPEN MUSEUM

# Thriving Places:

**Govanhill Open Museum - share your pride in where you live**

The Govanhill Open Museum is a celebration of our rich, vibrant, and unique heritage. The project will bring local memories out to our neighbourhood's streets, starting with a mural in the pilot phase, and later expanding into a wider outdoor heritage trail. The community will guide the project at every stage.

## Get involved

Govanhill is full of stories and memories, and we're inviting the community to come along to one of our focus groups to share theirs.

On Thursday 16 September at 6 - 7:30 pm join us for Stories of Govanhill, an interactive online event where Govanhillians of different backgrounds will tell us about life in the neighbourhood as they know it. The stage will then be open to anyone with a story to share!

Sign up here: [www.tinyurl.com/govanhillOM](http://www.tinyurl.com/govanhillOM).

The input that people share during these focus groups will be brought together by an artist into a heritage-themed mural located in the heart of Govanhill.

Later, the project will expand into a heritage trail that is shaped by local people's wishes and in collaboration with more groups and organisations. You can help us shape the future of Govanhill Open Museum by telling us what you'd like to see as part of this trail. It only takes a few minutes: [www.tinyurl.com/futureGOM](http://www.tinyurl.com/futureGOM).

# Free Indoor Bicycle Storage Available

Sign Up  
Online!



**Following receipt of funding from Cycling Scotland we are now able to offer 50 tenants indoor bicycle storage, which will be installed free of charge by MEARS as part of their social benefit programme.**

This storage provided will be either a hook or rack attached to a wall or an overhead pulley system.

If you are interested in having indoor bicycle storage installed in your home, please fill in the following survey monkey form:  
[surveymonkey.co.uk/r/78YM6DR](https://surveymonkey.co.uk/r/78YM6DR)

Please note, the exact type of storage installed will be dependent on availability and a suitable location within the property.

If you are unable to complete this form, please ask your housing officer for more information.

As part of the funding, we will also be installing a limited number of lockable outdoor bike sheds as part of a pilot project. If this is successful, we will seek further funding to expand this work.

**Cycling  
Scotland**

**MEARS**



Are you

# Looking For A Job, To Increase Your Income Or Find Education & Training Opportunities?



- Ongoing 121 tailored support with a dedicated worker in your local community
- Access to employability and affordability to work advice
- Support with job search activities
- Support with CV, cover letter, application forms and interview techniques
- Access to skills, training, education and volunteering
- In-work and aftercare support provided

**For an initial chat and more information please contact**

Gillian Scott  
Employability Worker GCDT  
Mob: 07919 372488  
Email: [gscott@govanhillha.org](mailto:gscott@govanhillha.org)

For assistance with volunteering opportunities please contact  
Ruth Plummer, Volunteer Co-ordinator GCDT,  
Mob: 07393 233463, Email: [rplummer@govanhillha.org](mailto:rplummer@govanhillha.org)



Govanhill Opportunities is a free service funded by Glasgow City Council, The Scottish Government and The National Lottery Community Fund, delivered by Govanhill Community Development Trust, a subsidiary of Govanhill Housing Association.



**Please Contact Us At:** Freepost Better Living

**General Enquiries:** 0141 636 3636

**Web:** [www.govanhillha.org](http://www.govanhillha.org) • **Email:** [checkin@govanhillha.org](mailto:checkin@govanhillha.org)

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