

# GOVANHILL NEWSLETTER



The Newsletter of Govanhill Housing Association

Autumn 2022



Govanhill Community Development Trust (GCDT)

- 254 registered students attending 14 Zoom classes each week
- 14% occupancy of Trust's commercial properties
- 22 people moved into work
- Continuous support provided by staff for our communities
- Multiple connections made through Training Places

GCDT

## Association Holds First in Person AGM since before COVID-19 Pandemic

On Thursday the 15th of September at the Elim Church the Association held its first 'in person' Annual General Meeting since before the Covid-19 pandemic.

A full report, including details of the newly elected committee, and the Garden Competition winners can be found on page 3.

### Landlord Report

The main portion of this Newsletter features the charter performance report for the year 2021/2022. This report sets out how Govanhill Housing Association is performing against the standards set in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

You can find this report on pages 5 to 10.

### Samaritan House Office Opening Times

The office at Samaritan house is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm with a break for lunch between 12:30pm and 1:30pm.



# Tis the season for Gas Safety Checks!

Every year the Association carries out Gas Safety checks on all our properties. These inspections are a vital part of ensuring that your home is safe and they are a legal requirement.

## Why do we need to do a gas safety check every year?

The consequences of issues with gas fittings can be very serious. Every year at least 7 people die from carbon monoxide poisoning because of poorly fitted appliances and faulty gas fittings.

To prevent illness or loss of life, social landlords are required by law to maintain gas fittings and flues in a safe condition and to carry out safety checks for appliances and flues at intervals of not more than twelve months.

## What happens during a Gas Safety Check?

We start the process of arranging your gas safety check around two months before it is due to ensure that we have time to arrange access to your home. Once access has been arranged our engineer will carry out a full check of your gas appliance/s which involves ensuring that the appliance:

- is properly set and adjusted so that the gas burns correctly
- is suitable for the room it is in

- is physically stable, securely fitted and properly connected to the gas pipework

We also check that

- there is an adequate and permanent air supply that is suitable for the appliance installed
- all safety devices are functioning properly
- all flues, chimneys and air vents are operating correctly

You will be provided with a copy of the gas safety record within 28 days of the check being carried out.

The gas safety check usually takes no longer than one hour.

## What do I need to do?

You will be informed by letter when it is time for your gas safety check, it is important that you let our operatives into your home so that they can carry out the inspection. If the time or date given do not suit you please get in touch as soon as possible to arrange another time. We can arrange appointments out with normal working hours where required and offer Saturday morning appointments.

You must also make sure you have sufficient money in your electric meter to ensure this check can be carried out.

**IMPORTANT:** BECAUSE GAS SAFETY CHECKS ARE A LEGAL REQUIREMENT, IF WE ARE UNABLE TO ACCESS YOUR PROPERTY, WE WILL HAVE TO DO A 'FORCED ENTRY' TO GAIN ACCESS.

IF WE FORCE ACCESS AND YOU ARE NOT AT HOME YOUR GAS METER WILL BE CAPPED AND YOUR LOCKS CHANGED.

YOU WILL BE CHARGED FOR THIS APPOINTMENT.

THIS IS CALLED A RECHARGE AND INCLUDES ALL COSTS INCURRED BY THE ASSOCIATION INCLUDING STAFF AND CONTRACTORS TIME AS WELL AS MATERIALS.

To avoid this, it is particularly important that you contact us as soon as possible if you are unable to be at your property at the time of your gas inspection.

You must be in the property whilst this check is carried out.



# Association Holds First Hybrid AGM

**On Thursday the 15th of September at the Elim Church the Association held its first 'in person' Annual General Meeting since before the Covid-19 pandemic.**

The meeting gave share members the opportunity to find out about the Association's work over the previous year. The meeting is also where the annual accounts are accepted, and the new management committee is elected.

The AGM was well attended and provided a welcome opportunity for members to meet in person.

David Robb, our new Head of Finance and IT presented the Annual Accounts and gave credit to the Association for managing to reach a sound financial position, which will be particularly important in the months ahead.

During the meeting members raised ongoing issues with the local environment, in particular issues with waste on the street. The Association will continue to raise these concerns with our elected members and with Glasgow City Council.



## New Committee is Elected

**The new committee of Govanhill Housing Association was elected on the 15th of September. They are as follows.**

John McLardie - Chair

Cheryl Miller - Vice Chair

Elizabeth Klein - Secretary

Keith Kintrea - Treasurer

Jennifer Cassells

Iain Doherty

Audrey Flannagan

Ghazala Hakeem

Wilma Logan

Barbara Robertson

Mujeeb Ur-Rehman

# Letter from the Chair

**I want to take this opportunity both for myself and on behalf of the rest of the committee, the staff, and tenants of the Association to offer a sincere thankyou to Annie Macfarlane for her years of dedicated service to Govanhill Housing Association.**

Annie has been in the roles of chair and vice chair for around 9 years and her contribution to both the Association and the wider Housing Movement has been invaluable.

Annie has always been very vocal when it comes to causes that she cares about. During the Southwest Govanhill project to buy and improve some of the worst properties in the area, Annie stepped up to represent the community in front of the press and politicians. As a local resident she was able to communicate the impact the project would have and the drastic need for action. You only

need to walk down Annette Street to see how much the area has improved.

It is a great loss to the committee that Annie has chosen to step down, but we all wish her the very best for the future.

On a personal note, it is a tremendous honour to be selected once again for the role of chair. It has been a difficult few years for the Association, and there are many more obstacles to be overcome, however, I am confident that, by working together, we will be able to meet the challenges ahead.

*John McIardie*



# Govanhill Garden Awards! The results are in!

**We are pleased to announce the winner of this year's garden awards!**

**Govanhill**

**First prize:**  
Mr Bob Nelson

**Second Prize:**  
Mr Edward McCann

**Third Prize:**  
Ms D Hoyland

**Merrylee**

**First prize:**  
Residents at 32  
Ashmore Road

**Most Charming Street**

A special award for all the ground floor flats in the section of Annette Street between Calder Street and Allison Street for their care for their front gardens.

***Well done everyone!***



## Landlord report

This report sets out how Govanhill Housing Association is performing against the standards set in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. This report covers the year from April 2021 to March 2022.

### Our Homes

As of March 2022, we owned and managed 2,789 homes. Our average weekly rent in 2022 was £93.35 which is slightly higher than the Scottish Average of £85.36.

On average our rent increased by 3.6% in April 2022 which is well below inflation, which was 9% at that time.

In 2020/21 rent increased by 1%.

### Property Size



## Our Rents

Size of Property	Govanhill HA	Southside HA	Cathcart and District HA	New Gorbals HA	Scottish Average
1 Apartment	£75.38	£70.63	£63.87	£58.81	£75.95
2 Apartment	£87.04	£79.23	£69.81	£77.41	£81.32
3 Apartment	£94.51	£91.12	£83.38	£84.99	£84.18
4 Apartment	£107.76	£102.83	£94.92	£98.84	£91.48
5 Apartment or larger	£125.07	£116.58	£97.45	£110.12	£100.74

## Rent Collection

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

Our Welfare Rights Team supported 816 new clients and opened 1379 new benefit cases.

This generated £2,649,908.42 in funds to support tenants in paying rent.

Of rent due 3.92% was in arrears in March

2022. There has been a steady improvement in rent collection over the last 3 years; in 2021 5.2% of rent was in arrears and in 2020 this figure was 4.83%

This is also significantly better than the national picture, at 31 March 2022 social landlords had total arrears of rent of £169,626,857. This is 6.3% of total rent due.

## Rent Restructure

The Association are in the process of implementing a rent restructure, through which 70% of tenants will receive a reduction in the amount of rent paid.

## Customer satisfaction

**The Association completed a large-scale Customer Satisfaction Survey in 2020/21. The results shown here are from that survey and reflect the fact that it took place during height of pandemic. Some Associations completed their surveys before or after this period which makes a direct comparison difficult. Our next survey will take place in 2023/2024.**

Tenant satisfaction with	overall service provided	opportunities given to participate in landlord decision making	quality of home	repairs service	landlord contribution to management of neighbourhood
Govanhill HA	82.77%	91.24%	87.15%	84.96%	78.58%
Parkhead Housing Association Ltd	94.5%	98.5%	96%	-	92.75 %
Thenue Housing Association Ltd	90.25%	91.25%	87.25%	99.53%	87.5%
Whiteinch and Scotstoun Housing Association Ltd	88.95%	96.08%	87.14%	90.05%	86.08%

## Anti-Social Behaviour

In 2021/22 we had 142 reports of anti-social behaviour. In 2020/21 this figure was 144.

## Percentage of Anti-Social Behaviour Cases Resolved

Landlord Name	Govanhill HA	Southside HA	New Gorbals HA	Scottish Average
Percentage of Antisocial Behaviour Cases Resolved	80.99%	100%	75.9%	95.71%

### Lettings

**During the last year we let 233 properties in total, this was an increase on 176 the year before.**

Of these properties 26 were lets to existing tenants, 159 were lets to waiting list applicants, 47 were let to homeless applicants via section 5 homeless referral and 1 property was a let via nomination from Local Authority. In addition to the 233 lets there were 2 mutual exchanges.

We received 78 homeless referrals of which 55 resulting in an offer of housing.

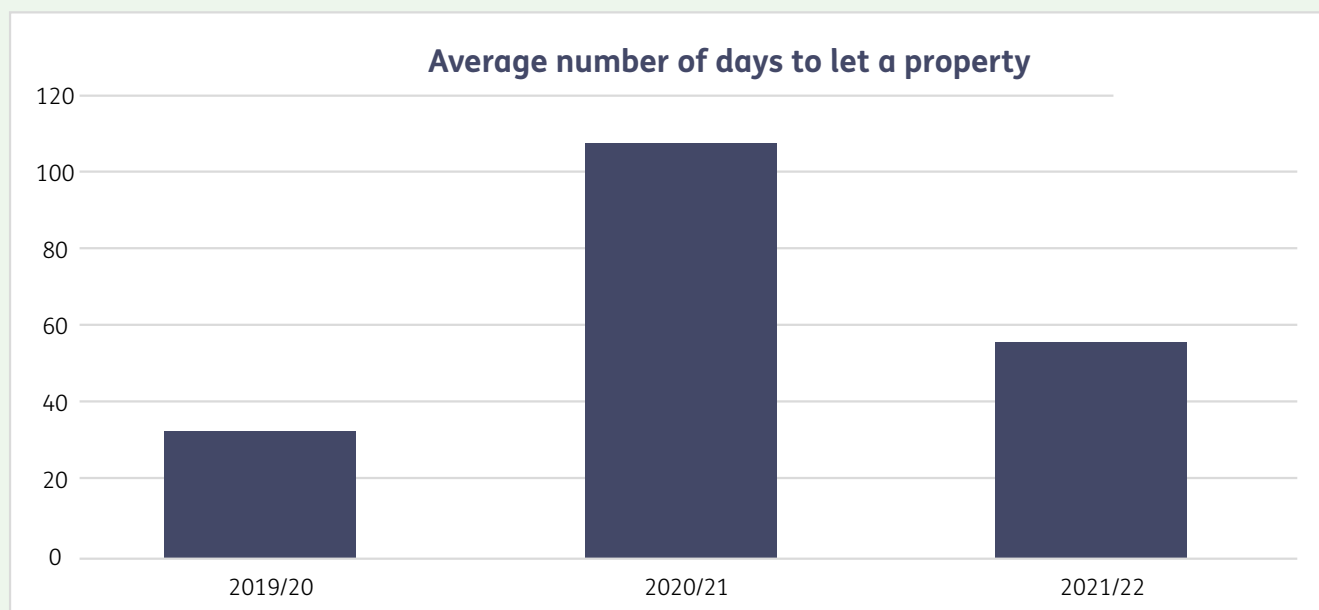
### Empty Homes

**We work hard to minimise lost income through empty properties and try to reallocate and relet homes as quickly as possible.**

During 2020/2021 the average number of days to relet a property shot up to 105.14, which can be attributed to lockdown restrictions and other associated difficulties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021/22 the average number of days to relet a property was 55.9, a significant improvement on the previous year, and just behind the Scottish Average of 51.57 days. However, this is still behind the figure for 2019/2020 which was 31.4 days. We did not collect 1.8% of rent due because homes were empty, which is slightly higher than the national average of 1.4%.

Average number of days to let a property



## Repairs and Maintenance

The pandemic had a significant impact on the Association's ability to carry out repairs in the year 2020/21, when our focus was on emergency repairs.

In 2021/2022 the Association had the opportunity address outstanding non-emergency repairs as restrictions eased. This can be seen in the improvement in time taken to complete non-emergency repairs.

When looking at time taken to complete repairs, Govanhill Housing Association's performance is better than the Scottish national average.



## Average time to Complete an Emergency Repair

Govanhill Housing Association  
**2.6 hours**

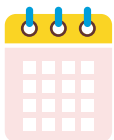


Scottish Average  
**4.2 hours**



## Average time to Complete a Non-Emergency Repair

Govanhill Housing Association



**8.32 days**

Scottish Average



**8.87 days**

## Adaptations

We completed 17 adaptations this year which took an average 35.12 days to complete. 14 households were waiting for adaptation to their home at the end of the year.

## 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, it is 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 74.8% of our properties meet this standard which is better than the Scottish average of 73.5%

Landlord Name	Govanhill HA	Southside HA	Cathcart and District HA	New Gorbals HA	Scottish Average
Number of Properties Meeting the SHQS	74.8%	71.5%	29.2%	90.4%	73.5%

## Your Association and the Environment: The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing

**The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) aims to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. It will help to reduce energy consumption, fuel poverty and the emission of greenhouse gases. With the increasing cost of energy, it is particularly important that we work towards**

**meeting this standard to bring bills down for our tenants.**

In 2021/2021 85.2% of our properties were compliant with this standard. This is a significant improvement on 2020/2021 when 56.8% of our homes met the ESSH.

## Comparison with other Associations

Landlord Name	Govanhill HA	Southside HA	Cathcart and District HA	New Gorbals HA
Number of Properties Meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing	85.2%	81.6%	83.4%	99.5%



## Complaints Figures

The Association works hard to provide the best possible service, but we don't 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 in order to ensure mistakes are not repeated.

	1st stage	2nd stage
Complaints received	48	17
Complaints carried forward from previous year	1	1
All complaints received and carried forward	49	18
Number of complaints responded to in full	48	18

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

In 2021/22 there were 67 complaints, 49 of which were Stage 1 (73%), 18 were stage 2 with a further eight being escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2. The percentage of complaints escalated to stage 2 fell this year, from 20%

last year to 16% this year. It is always our aim to resolve complaints at stage 1 so we hope to see this trend continue.

We received several complaints about communication by the Association, and others around our repair projects. Both aspects of our work have been affected by post covid staffing issues. In particular, the issues facing the construction industry have had an impact on our development work.

## Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests

Subject Access Requests:

7



Freedom of Information Requests:

5



Environmental information requests:

6



Most of our requests came from journalists, academics, unions, and former tenants.

# Govanhill Community Development Trust to deliver SQA recognised qualifications

**GCDT have been awarded assessor verifier status by the Scottish Qualifications Authority, giving them the power to award recognised qualifications for the first time.**

Our ESOL team will offer both National 2 Listening and Speaking, and National 2 Reading and Writing.

ESOL student Muntah Waqas says

*“In Pakistan I was a teacher in a school. I taught Juniors like in a nursery school. Now in the UK I am a housewife, but I like teaching and I want to get a job in the future. I can use this SQA certificate to help me get teaching experience and later find a job.”*

As well as offering ESOL classes, GCDT will also offer a recognised employability course ‘Responsibilities for Employment’ which is offered as SCQF level 3. This unit is designed to help learners prepare for the world of work. This unit can be used towards a qualification at other further education institutions.

For details of these courses contact Ellen Feerick on [efeerick@govanhillha.org](mailto:efeerick@govanhillha.org) or 07919364673.



# Association Awards 40 Student Bursaries for Tenants in Education

**The Association was delighted to be able to award education bursaries to 40 of our tenants to support them in their studies. This money does not have to be paid back and can be used on anything that will help them in their education.**

We had 46 applicants and we were pleased that the vast majority of those who applied met the criteria.

Scott is studying computing and was awarded £137 towards his studies.

‘Just before I found out I had been awarded this grant my computer broke, so I will

probably use the money to get a part in order to fix it or look at getting a new laptop – which will be useful for me!’



# Participation in Action!

## Community vote for Thriving Places Funding Award

**After an intense public vote, we are delighted to announce the results of the Thriving Govanhill funding awards! Ten local projects will receive £2500 Action Grants, with another ten receiving £1000 Kickstart Grants.**

The projects span a broad array of health and wellbeing activity, from 'soundbaths' in care homes through to community gardening, cycling, music projects, arts activities, youth activity and support for Womens' groups.

The awards also mark a triumph for local democracy and participation, with over 400 residents casting their votes. We're delighted that so many have taken part in decision making around how local funding should be targeted.

Thanks to all who have taken part in the voting and congratulations and good luck to the grant recipients in delivering their projects!

More details about all the projects below can be found at [Govanhill.info](http://Govanhill.info)

### Action Grants

**ACTIVE LIFE CLUB** – Active Communities Project

**BIG NOISE GOVANHILL** – Big Noise Govanhill October 2022 Holiday Club

**GLASGOW ZINE LIBRARY** – Govanhill Arts and Crafts After School Project

**GOVANHILL BATHS COMMUNITY TRUST** – Community Well-being with Govanhill Baths

**GOVANHILL COMMUNITY GARDEN** – Govanhill Community Garden Well-being Project

**LARKFILED COMMUNITY CENTRE** – Opportunities for Women

**MILK** – After School Homework Club

**MUSIC BROTH** – Get Creative!

**THE FEEL GOOD WOMEN'S GROUP** – Fitness and Friends

**WOMEN ON WHEELS** – Women on Wheels

### Kickstart Grants

**CATHKIN BLAZES CFC** – Winter Pitches for a Gender Inclusive Women's Football Group in Govanhill

**GLASGOW SOUNDBATH** – Bringing Soundbaths to Care Homes



**GOVANHILL ROMA YOUTH GROUP**

**GREATER GOVANHILL CIC** – ESOL & Educational Resources for Greater Govanhill Magazine

**KIN KITCHEN** – Govanhill Cooking Exchange

**OUR RIGHTS, OUR COMMUNITIES**

**QUEENS PARK CHESS CLUB**

**ROMA MEN'S GROUP**

**SEW ROMA GOVANHILL**

**WOMEN WELL-BEING GROUP**

# Community Garden Raise £1477 at Annual Fundraiser!

On the 3rd of September Govanhill Community Garden held their annual fundraising event and raised a fantastic £1477 to continue their work.

The day was very rainy, but the weather didn't stop people coming along and showing their support for the garden while they enjoyed taking part in a raffle, seed planting and even having a go on a Fire Engine.

Congratulations to everyone involved.



## Merrylee Special Edition Planned to Celebrate 70 years of Merrylee



2022 marks the 70th anniversary of the Merrylee Housing Estate. To celebrate this, we are planning a special edition of the Association Newsletter dedicated to the history of this estate. If you would like to contribute, please contact Liz at [lely@govanhillha.org](mailto:lely@govanhillha.org).

# MEARS and Govanhill Housing Association Launch Live Messaging for Repairs

MEARS And Govanhill Housing Association are working together to improve communication and have introduced a new live messaging system. You are now able to find out exactly when MEARS operatives will arrive at your property through an SMS message and a weblink. By clicking on this link, you will also be able to reschedule your repair and even communicate in real time with MEARS operatives.

## Communication During a Repair: What to Expect

### Before the repair

When a repair is scheduled, you will receive a text message confirming the time and date of the appointment.

24 hours before the repair, and on the morning of the repair MEARS will send reminder text messages. At this point you will have the opportunity to rearrange your appointment.

MEARS operatives will also call the customer when enroute.

The text message will contain a link to a web portal. By clicking this link you can view, manage, or reschedule your appointment. You will be able to view the name and photo of the person coming to conduct your repair. You will

also be able to see their location on a map (like Uber, or other delivery apps)

Using this App, it will also be possible to communicate with MEARS workers, for example letting them know if you have had to go out.



## During the repair

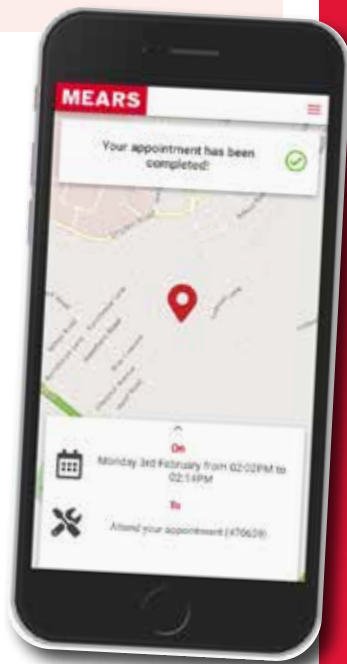
MEARS operatives will introduce themselves, show their ID, use a password where required, and explain the reason for their visit, using any necessary communication aids. They will explain the repair, what work is needed, and how long they think it will take.

They will let you know if at any point they need to leave your home (for example to get materials)

## After the repair

On completion, the operative will explain the work they have done, and ensure the customer is happy before leaving.

After the repair has been completed you will be asked for your feedback on the quality of the repair service. Completing these surveys is a valuable way for MEARS and Govanhill Housing Association to continue to improve our repairs service.



# MEARS

## Important Information

You do not need to download an app to your phone to access this information, just follow the weblink in the SMS message.

Text messages from MEARS will always look like the picture above, MEARS will never ask for personal information, in particular bank details or other personally identifying details. If you receive any messages asking for this kind of information, please contact the Association.

The MEARS operatives will not receive your phone number through these messages or the weblink.



## The Community Benefits: MEARS Fit Bicycle Storage without cost to Association

**A key part of the Association's procurement process is ensuring that our contractors deliver maximum value for tenants and the wider community, not only in their day-to-day work but also in their ability to give extra to the community.**

As part of this added value to the community MEARS are fitting internal bike storage for tenants at no extra cost.

If you would like to have internal bicycle storage fitted in your property please contact Linda at [lhiddleston@govanhillha.org](mailto:lhiddleston@govanhillha.org)

# COST OF LIVING CRISIS: KEY CONTACTS

We know that the cost of living has increased significantly and many in Govanhill and Merrylee will be finding it difficult to cope this autumn. The Scottish Government have recently launched a website with advice to cope with the crisis, visit [costofliving.campaign.gov.scot](http://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot) for more info.

We have also included a list of key local contacts for anyone struggling.

## Rent and Housing Costs

If you are struggling to pay your rent please contact our rents team as soon as possible. You can

**Judith Christie:** 0141 - 636 - 3624

**Avril White:** 0141 - 636 - 3662

**Loraine Jennings:** 0141- 636- 3672

**Sandra Murray:** 0141 - 433 - 2141

**Lesley McSkimming:** 0141 - 636 - 3647

To make sure you are receiving any benefits you are entitled to contact our welfare rights team on

**Shaneela Afzal** 0141 - 636 - 3651

**Julie Brooks** 0141 - 636 - 3686

**Shamim Ahmad** 0141 - 636 - 3627  
Working days Tue. / Wed. / Thurs.



## Heating and Energy

**South Seeds** can help you to access support and help you to ensure your home is as energy efficient as possible. Contact them on **0141 636 3959**.



Our welfare rights team are also able refer tenants who may need a fuel voucher for a pre-payment meter. Please email [welfarerights@govanhillha.org](mailto:welfarerights@govanhillha.org) or contact our welfare rights team

## Food

For a referral to your local Foodbank please speak to a member of staff.

Urban Roots have an online interactive map of everywhere in Glasgow offering Free Food. <https://www.urbanroots.org.uk/freefood/>

## Low-cost shopping

**People's Pantry Govanhill:** Located on **Cathcart Road**, Pantry members can do a shop for £3.50 every week. Pop in to find out more or join the waiting list. Open to anyone with a G42 postcode.

**Community Grocery Glasgow: 37 South Portland Street**, this community store is open to all and run by Destiny Church. Membership is £5 annually and a weekly shop is £4. Call **0141 815 1100** or email [glasgow@communitygrocery.org.uk](mailto:glasgow@communitygrocery.org.uk)

