

GOVANHILL NEWSLETTER



The Newsletter of Govanhill Housing Association

Spring 2018

Association Weathers Storm

Work continued at Govanhill Housing Association in sub-zero temperatures and heavy snowfall.

During severe weather the Association took the decision to close our offices on Wednesday the 28th of February and Thursday the 1st of March in response to Police Scotland warnings not to travel. We were able to offer a skeleton service on Friday the 2nd of March with service returning to normal on Monday the 5th of March.

During the severe weather the Association received 101 reports which required action from either Association staff or contractors. Of these reports 58 were emergency situations, 95% of which we managed to respond to within our agreed target timescale.

Govanhill Housing Association wishes to thank all of our tenants, staff and contractors for their patience and support during the severe weather.



Chairpersons's Letter

Spring may be here officially, but like much of the rest of the country the Association is dealing with the aftermath of the recent severe wintry weather. We are pleased that we were able to get back to business as usual promptly following the office closure, but some events and meetings were subject to cancellation. You will also notice that this newsletter is slightly shorter than usual.

We thank tenants, factored owners and others in the community for their patience and understanding at this time.

Other major news for tenants is the 2.9% rent increase agreed by the Management Committee on the 7th of March. This increase is both below inflation and the 3.9% increase which was consulted on. You can find out more about this increase along with detailed information about how decisions about rent levels are made and how money is spent on pages 4 and 5.

Spring is a time of change and transformation and this year the Association is undergoing a significant change as we welcome our new Director John Quinn who will be joining the Association in April. We bid farewell to our current Director Anne Lear who retires after 22 years of service. More information about this can be found on page 6.



Anne Lear Retires after 22 years of service

Govanhill Housing Association bids farewell to Anne Lear, who retires this month following 22 years of service. Anne came into post as Director in September 1996, and has overseen numerous important developments in that time.

Management Committee member Ann Scott, who is also a founding member of The Association says 'Anne has strong principles and has always undertaken her work with a real sense of fairness. Anne has worked tirelessly to improve housing conditions for the people of Govanhill. We wish her all the very best for her retirement'

Lyn Ewing, Chair of the Govanhill Community Development Trust says 'I remember when Anne started she thought she might be here for 5 years or so, that was 22 years ago! I think that just shows how much she got involved in the community and the work. Anne has worked hard and I admire her tremendously'.



This Spring the Association is launching a Facebook page, allowing tenants, local residents and anyone with an interest in the work of the Association to keep up to date with all the latest news and information.

The Association is keen for this page to be a useful resource. If you have any ideas about what should appear on the page please email lely@govanhillha.org.

If you are a Facebook user, check out [facebook/govanhillhousingassociation](https://www.facebook.com/govanhillhousingassociation) and give us a 'like'. If you have anything you wish to share don't hesitate to contact us!

GCDT Burns Ceilidh a major success: More than One Hundred People Turn Out to Celebrate Diversity

Over 140 people attended a multicultural Ceilidh at the Elim Church on 25th January; Burns Night. The event was organised by local residents and Govanhill Community Development Trust in response to requests for more opportunities to celebrate the diversity of the area.

ESOL teacher Lorraine gave a spirited address to the Haggis, and music was provided by staff from Big Noise Govanhill. The hall was decorated with Auld Lang Syne written in a variety of community languages and designed by the students of Shawlands Academy.



The event offered the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the many tireless volunteers who give their time and energy to making Govanhill a better place. Particular

compliments were offered to the Roma peer educators; 'a generation of new leaders' and to participants of the integration programme and their inspirational desire to put down roots in Govanhill.



An honourable mention was given to Dasha who has recently been awarded ESOL student of the year at her college.

The dancefloor was busy all night with dances ranging from traditional Scottish favourites like Strip the Willow to Romanian dance 'Crushing the



Hazelnuts'. Through dance and song, participants were able to concentrate on and celebrate what binds us together and what we have in common.

Local resident, Derry Thomson said 'Hopefully coming together to celebrate the diversity of Scotland and Scottish culture will be just the start of something bigger and better for the area. That's our philosophy in Govanhill'



Association Agrees Below Inflation Rent Increase of 2.9%

At the Management Committee meeting on Wednesday the 7th of March, the Association agreed a rent increase of 2.9% for the financial year 2018/19. This follows a period of consultation which began on the 8th of January when tenants were asked to give their feedback on a proposed inflation level increase of 3.9%.

More than 50% of tenants who responded agreed with increasing rents at a rate of 3.9% or higher. Mindful of pressures on tenants' incomes, the Management Committee agreed a below inflation increase for the second year running.

Further to this consultation process, we met with a group of tenants who shared their concerns about the proposed rate of increase. The committee further scrutinised the points raised and believes a below-inflation rent increase of 2.9% in 2018/19 is required to ensure we continue to meet our commitment to providing quality housing to tenants and delivering a high level of service.

We are always keen to hear the views of tenants and residents which help us to continue to improve the way we work. Letters have been sent out to all our tenants to inform them of the below-inflation rent increase.

What this means for Govanhill Housing Association Rents.

Number of Bedrooms	Previous Average Monthly Rent	New Monthly Rent	Increase
Studio	£294.84	£303.39	£8.55
1	£345.58	£355.61	£10.02
2	£366.99	£377.63	£10.64
3	£424.84	£437.16	£12.32
4+	£505.22	£519.87	£14.65

Rent Frequently Asked Questions

Why are the rents increasing?

Costs for the Association increase every year due to inflation. Any rent increase which is lower than this rate represents a net reduction in income for the Association. This year inflation is 3.9%.

The Association attempts to limit these increases as far as possible by carefully monitoring budgets and taking opportunities to make savings.

In order to keep homes secure, safe and warm it is important that we continue to invest in our properties. The Association spends

money on other important aspects of property maintenance such as pest control. Most of our properties are Victorian tenements which cost more money to maintain than new build housing.

How are decisions about rent levels made?

When the Association is considering increasing rents, we write to all tenants to gather views on the appropriate level of increase. We also arrange consultation events where tenants are able to give their views in person and

How the Association Spends Rent Money

This section aims to break down some of the publicly available financial information about how the Association spends money raised through rents.

For every £1 of your rent:



27p

Running costs including staff salaries, insuring our properties and other costs



15p

Repairing tenants' homes and keeping common areas and closes clean



10p

Loan payments (the cost of borrowing to pay for housing development and planned improvement works)



26p

Maintaining tenants' central heating, and the outside of tenants' homes including clearing gutters, repairing roofs and painting windows

22p

Improving tenants' homes including replacing heating systems, windows, kitchens and bathrooms



ask questions. This year, Govanhill Housing Association issued a consultation document on the 8th of January and set a deadline of the 9th of February for responses. We also held a consultation event on the 16th of January.

Alongside this consultation, the finance team put together detailed budgets and scenarios for the Management Committee to consider. This budgeting process takes into account financial obligations, committed spend, risks and potential for making savings.

Feedback from tenants is combined with this detailed budget planning process and presented to the Management Committee who make the final decision on the rate of increase.

All tenants are eligible to stand for the

Management Committee and participate in the decision making process. The Management Committee is made up of local people, most of whom are tenants of the Association.

For more information about joining our Management Committee contact our Director on 0141 636 3621.

Can we freeze the rents?

Whilst we are aware that any increase is difficult for tenants, a 0% increase in rent would prevent the Association from improving and repairing our properties. Without a modest increase we would be unable to fit new energy efficient heating systems, put in new double glazed windows or undertake much needed improvements to backcourts.

New Director appointed - Introducing John Quinn

Following the retirement of Anne Lear, Govanhill Housing Association is pleased to welcome our new Director, John Quinn, who will be joining the Association in April.

John has worked in housing and regeneration for the last 20 years in a variety of different roles. These include as Partnership Manager in the Gorbals working with Glasgow Alliance with a specific responsibility for all community and social regeneration initiatives and as Director of one of Scotland's first Urban Regeneration Companies in Craigmillar, Edinburgh.

He joins us from Aberdeen City Council where his most recent role was as Head of Land and Property Assets, which included Housing and Regeneration as well as Operational Assets and Facilities. In this role he was responsible for all of the Council's 22,000 houses and commercial properties.

Nominations are open for this year's Community Awards!

Do you have a Brilliant Backcourt or a Gorgeous Garden? Perhaps you have a neighbour who went above and beyond during the recent heavy snow? If this is the case then why not nominate them for a Govanhill Community Award?

We will be looking for standout entries in the following categories.

- Best front garden
- Most creative garden feature
- Best backcourt
- Good neighbour
- Best kept close

Residents are invited to nominate themselves, or a neighbour; staff will also be looking out for potential nominees when they are out and about in the area.

Nomination forms can be found on the back page of this newsletter and should be returned to Samaritan House by the 31st of July. Winners will be announced in our Autumn Newsletter.

Tenants' Drop-In is Back for Spring

Tenant's at last years conference decided it was important to keep in touch with each other and ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to get involved in the Association and the area.

Come along for a cuppa, meet other tenants, talk together and link in with the Association.

The drop-ins will be held from 6-8pm in the Community Hall at Samaritan House on Tuesday the 17th of April and 15th of May and thereafter every third Tuesday of the month.

For more information contact Jennifer Ferguson on 0141 636 3668; jferguson@govanhillha.org.

AGE-FRIENDLY KNOWLEDGE CAFE

We invite Govanhill residents age 60+ and public, private and voluntary sector organisations to identify shared priorities for creating an Age-Friendly Community!

free lunch!

12 APRIL 12:00 pm

Samaritan House
79 Coplaw St
Govanhill G42 7JG

PLACE-MAKING WITH OLDER ADULTS

TO BOOK A PLACE, CONTACT MEIKO AT 079-7488-1186 OR M.MAKITA@HW.AC.UK

The Remembrance Tree

On the 14th of December, Govanhill Community Garden held a remembrance event where members of the community were invited to gather and pay tribute to their loved ones. 'The Remembrance Tree' was written by Rosie Smith to mark the occasion. For more information about the Garden including how to add a name to the tree go to facebook.com/GovanhillCommunityRemembranceGarden



A wee bit of Perspex, attached to a wall.
No roots in the ground, for it to grow tall.
With brown for a trunk & green for leaves,
It's as mighty as an oak, to the person that grieves.
On brass leaves there's a name, look closer & you'll see,
Of someone still loved, by you & by me.
It's not pine or cherry, not even a tree as such
But that will not matter, to the hearts it will touch.
No water is needed, it's love that will flow,
With its size never changing, it continues to grow.

By Rosie Smith

Latest News from Govanhill Tenants and Residents Groups

MERGE welfare group plan Fundraising events and Socials

The MERGE group represent black and minority ethnic tenants and residents in the Govanhill area and have been a residents group for 15 years. The group meets once a month to discuss local housing issues and are currently planning social activities, fundraising and other fun events in the coming months. If you would like to get involved please contact: Amra Nazim at anazim@govanhillha.org.

Jamieson Court Residents Group Keep Fit and Entertained

Tenants at Jamieson Court have been making the most of their new common room with keep fit, musical entertainment, and bingo. They are currently looking out for a set of indoor carpet bowls. If anyone has a set of bowls no longer in use, the group would be delighted with a donation. Please contact Jennifer jferguson@govanhillha.org for more information.

Student Visitors get stuck in with MerryLee Litter Pick

A group of Baptist students from the University of Alabama visited Cathcart Baptist Church this month. During their stay they enjoyed meeting the people of MerryLee and getting stuck in to the residents group litter pick on the 14th of March. The group brought an infectious



energy and enthusiasm as they got a sense of what this part of Glasgow is like.

Tenants' Conference planned for early summer: Get involved!

We are aiming to hold our Tenants' Conference in early summer this year. The conference will be based on themes arising from our recent tenant satisfaction survey. If you would like to be involved in the planning of this year's conference please contact Jennifer on **0141 636 3668** / jferguson@govanhillha.org

GOVANHILL COMMUNITY AWARDS 2018



- Best front garden
- Best backcourt
- Best kept close
- Most creative garden feature
- Good neighbour

Nominate your favourites!

(Please use CAPITAL LETTERS)

Your name:

Your address:

Telephone Number:

Who would you like to nominate?

Please provide their name and address below and their telephone number if you can.
(or just the address if you are making a nomination for best kept close or backcourt):

.....
.....

Which award are you nominating them for? (please tick box)

- ☐ Best front garden ☐ Best back court ☐ Best kept close ☐ Most creative garden feature ☐ Good neighbour

Are they aware that
you are making a
nomination?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ Don't know

Why do you think the above deserves an award?

Your signature: Date:

Please return your nomination forms by 5pm on 31st July to:
**Govanhill Housing Association, Samaritan House,
79 Coplaw Street, GLASGOW G42 7JG**

Nominations can also be emailed to checkin@govanhillha.org for the attention of Jennifer Ferguson



Please Contact Us At: Freepost Better Living

General Enquiries: 0141 636 3636 • Fax: 0141 636 3685

Web: www.govanhillha.org • Email: checkin@govanhillha.org

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