

GOVANHILL NEWSLETTER



The Newsletter of Govanhill Housing Association

Spring 2021

COVID –19 Update from Govanhill Housing Association

Over the last few months COVID-19 restrictions have begun to ease. At the time of writing Glasgow is under Level 3 restrictions, however according to the Scottish Government's phased plan we hope that this will progress to level 0 by July.

These changes bring welcome freedoms and see the return of hospitality venues and other aspects of normality, however even when we progress to level 0 government guidance still states that working from home should be the default option. You can read more about the Covid protection levels online at www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels

Samaritan House

The Scottish Government have stated that even at a restriction 'level 0' home working for non-essential workers should remain the default position. This means that Samaritan House should remain closed to the public.

Some of our staff will be in the office to complete essential tasks such as letting properties, and others may be out in the community dealing with repairs and property checks, but as a rule our staff will continue to work from home.

However

- Although the office is closed for health and safety reasons, the Association is very much still open.
- In person appointments can still be made if they are necessary and these must be arranged in advance.

You can contact our staff by phone during normal working hours to discuss all tenancy and housing matters: full staff contact details are available on the reverse of this newsletter.

Phased Re-Opening: What this Means for our Services

Repairs and Maintenance

From Monday 26th of April the Association recommenced non-essential repairs and maintenance.

During the national lockdown we have continued to provide essential repairs and have completed 6,780 number of repairs along with programmed gas safety checks during this time.

Our contractors will be continuing to carry out repairs using the safety systems we have put in place as a result of COVID-19, using the appropriate protective equipment to keep you as safe as possible.

Factoring

Our factoring team continue to work hard from home. We're still contactable from Monday to Friday 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. to deal with any issues you may have about any aspect of our services.

Staff can be contacted on **0141 - 636 - 3666** or **0141 - 636 - 3673** and our email address is FactoringTeam@govanhillha.org.

The factoring team are receiving a high volume of calls. If you are struggling to get through, please leave a voicemail and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Development

Now that restrictions are being relaxed, we are pleased to confirm that our delayed window and kitchen upgrades will be carried out this year. Our Development Team will keep tenants concerned updated.

Govanhill Community Development Trust (GCDT)



GCDT
GOVANHILL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Our staff are working hard from home and continue to find creative ways to engage with the community through online platforms such as Facebook and Zoom. Staff are available for support work over the phone.

The Community Support Centre on Allison Street remains closed and will be for the foreseeable future.

Offices/Workspaces To Rent

We have a number of offices to rent on flexible terms, available to essential services at the current time (in line with Scottish Government Covid guidelines). For more information, please contact Marie McBeth, email mmcbeth@govanhillha.org or call 07741 893008.

Govanhill Workers Feature in NHS Campaign to Bust Vaccine Myths

Three of the Association and GCDT's multilingual staff have recently featured in information videos created by the NHS to set the record straight on COVID-19 and vaccination.

Myths around the safety of vaccination can spread in all communities regardless of language spoken: it is vital that everyone is able to access accurate information.

The videos are available online and can be viewed on the GCDT Facebook page.



Trei angajați multilingvi ai GCDT au apărut recent în videoclipuri informative, care fac parte din campania NHS, în vederea clarificării informațiilor legate de COVID-19 și vaccinare.

Mituri despre siguranța vaccinării se pot răspândi în toate comunitățile, indiferent de limba vorbită: este important ca toată lumea să poată accesa informații corecte.

Videoclipurile sunt disponibile online și pot fi vizualizate aici GCDT Facebook.



Místní komunitní pracovníci, které určitě dobře znáte, pro Vás nedávno natočili krátká videa o Kovidu a očkování. Tato videa byla připravená ve spolupráci s NHS.

Mýty kolem očkování se mohou šířit v kterékoliv komunitě. Proto je důležité, aby lidi měli přístup k informacím z důvěryhodných zdrojů, jako je ten náš.

Videa ve vašem jazyku najdete zde: GCDT Facebook page.

Community Garden Holds Successful AGM

The community garden group held their annual general meeting on the 21st of April, and were blessed with a sunny day which allowed them to meet outside, in a group of fewer than 6 households, in accordance with Covid guidance.

The Community Garden is still open to the public, for more information check out their Facebook group facebook.com/groups/govanhillcommunitygarden



Photo by Danny Rizzo aka Glasgow Snapper

On Yer Bike!

Association Receives Funding for Better Bicycle Storage for Tenants

The Association is pleased to announce that we have received funding from Cycling Scotland to install 3 outdoor cycling storage areas, as well as funding for internal storage solutions including pulleys and wall racks.

This pilot project is intended to support residents to make the best use of the new cycling infrastructure in and around Govanhill.

We are looking for a group of tenants who are interested in cycling to consult with throughout the project. Do you have a bicycle or two? Do you have opinions about the



best way to store bicycles in a tenement flat? We want to hear from you!

To get involved contact jferguson@govanhillha.org

Bike for Good Launch Pedal Pals Online Platform



Are you looking to get back on your bike after a bit of time away? Would you like to meet other cyclists in the area? Perhaps you would like a confidence boost or a buddy to get back on the bike with.

Bike for good have recently launched Pedal Pals is a digital platform for connecting people through cycling in Glasgow.

By creating an online profile you can:

- Arrange to meet one to one with other cyclists and cycle together.
- Share skills and cycling knowledge.
- Learn new and exciting routes to explore cycling.

For more information or to sign up go to www.bikeforgood.org.uk/pedal-pals/

COVID-19 2020/2021: Remembering our Loved Ones in Govanhill and Merrylee

Govanhill Housing Association, our Committee and Staff wish to offer our deepest condolences to everyone who has lost someone during this extraordinary and difficult time.

The COVID-19 Crisis has affected all of us. It can be difficult to comprehend the scale of loss around the world, and in our community.

Our thoughts are with everyone in Govanhill and Merrylee grieving a loved one this year. Grief and loss at a time when we are also physically isolated from each other is

particularly cruel and there is little anyone can say to make the process any easier.

If you find yourself struggling to cope help is out there.

Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland have a helpline and a webchat on their site at <http://www.crusescotland.org.uk/>

Their Helpline is available on from 9am-8pm Monday to Friday and from 1pm-4pm at weekends.

Call 0808 802 6161 free to speak to someone.

Community Remembrance Garden

The Govanhill Community Remembrance Garden remains open and provides a peaceful space for contemplation and remembrance.

The garden was founded in 2016 when the first tree was established.

During this time the garden has been a great success

The garden will be 5 years old in July this year, and the group are looking to put up a fourth tree soon.

Anyone who wishes to remember a loved one can order a plaque with their name to be placed on the memorial trees. The plaques are made by Gerry Flemming, formerly the Cobbler on Allison Street. There is a small charge of £5 for this, which covers the creation and installation of the plaques.

For more information about the garden, or to order a plaque to remember a loved one visit the community remembrance garden on **Facebook: [facebook.com/GovanhillCommunityRemembranceGarden](https://www.facebook.com/GovanhillCommunityRemembranceGarden)**



Remembering Susie Kennedy

The Association was very sad to learn of the passing of our colleague Susan Kennedy in March this year.



Susan, more often known as Susie, worked with the Association for almost 8 years as a finance assistant. Susie was an exceptionally kind and helpful person who was well-liked by everyone she worked alongside.

Susie always had a smile for us and made many friends in the organisation. She will be greatly missed.

Our thoughts are with everyone who knew and loved her, especially her two children Jennifer and Scott.

Financial Support: V

Glasgow City Council COVID-19 Hardship Grant

Association tenants invited to apply for Glasgow City Council COVID-19 hardship fund.

Through their *Addressing Future Needs Covid 19 Fund* Glasgow City Council have made an award of £9000 to help Govanhill Housing Association Tenants experiencing hardship caused by Covid 19.

We know that many tenants have been impacted by COVID-19. This grant is aimed at those tenants experiencing financial hardship because of the pandemic, and who have been unable to obtain assistance from other sources.

Below are a few examples of the sort of circumstances which may qualify:

- Reduced earnings through furlough, or redundancy making it difficult to pay bills.
- Positive Covid test and had to self-isolate and excluded from the self- isolation grant
- Additional fuel costs from staying home &/or working from home.
- Incurring debt as a result of needing to purchase equipment/ internet access to support home schooling or keep in contact with relatives
- Moving home and extra costs incurred due to the pandemic

To apply:

- You must be experiencing financial hardship because of COVID-19.
- Prior to any grant monies being awarded you must provide a copy of a recent bank statement verifying your home address, account number and sort code. All grants will be paid directly into this bank account.
- **You must complete the online survey <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/5FD9QCS> which will close on 30/06/21.**

Please note whilst £9000 seems like a considerable sum we will be considering applications from across all our tenants. Dependent on applications received there may be insufficient funds to meet all requests, or we may only be able to partially meet a request.

Applications will be considered by an independent panel and their decision will be final.

If your application is unsuccessful, you will be contacted by a member of our Welfare Rights Team or a Community Development Worker who may be able to offer you advice on other sources of support.

Support with Energy Costs: Pre-Payment Meter Fuel Vouchers

If you are suffering hardship as a result of the pandemic, have struggled to heat your home as a result of increased costs or reduced income, and have a pre-payment meter you are eligible to receive a fuel payment voucher from the Energy Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme.

Households can receive up to 3 vouchers a year from the scheme. To apply email your address and phone number to **welfarerights@govanhillha.org** and one of our welfare rights staff will get in touch to assist with your application.

Where to go for help

Tenant Hardship Loan Fund

The Tenant Hardship Loan Fund is designed to help people who have had their finances or employment impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and do not have other means of housing support.

The loans are available for social and private tenants up to a maximum of 9 months rent costs covering both rent arrears and 3 months of future rent, where this has arisen since January 2020.

Applications for the Tenant Hardship Loan

Fund can only be completed online. <https://tenanthardshiploan.est.org.uk/>

IMPORTANT: This is a repayable loan, so before applying it is important to ensure you are receiving all the financial support you are entitled to which does not need to be repaid (for example, Universal Credit and Discretionary Housing payments).

Contact our welfare rights team to make sure you are claiming everything you are entitled to on 0141 636 3686.

Updating your Housing Costs: Universal Credit Guide

Your monthly rent has changed from the 28th of April 2021. If you are on Universal Credit it is important to notify them of this change. If you require a note of the amount of rent you owe please contact the Rent Team on **0141 636 3653**.

Please Note: if your claim is a telephone claim you will need to phone Universal Credit on 0800 328 5644 to report any changes.

Log into your Universal Credit Account and go to your Home Page

Click on "Reporting a change in circumstances".
From the second drop down menu click on "where you live and what it costs"
Click Change

Input your rent amount which is paid monthly with no free weeks.
Input your service charges which are paid monthly with no free weeks.
Click confirm and submit your changes.

South West Govanhill Project Funded for a Further 2 years

The South West Acquisition and repairs programme has been funded by the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council for a further 2 years. This will continue our acquisitions programme which saw full close completions at 14 Westmoreland Street and

119 Bowman Street along with a further 45 properties completed in 2020/21.

The work is set to continue at Annette Street, 97 Westmoreland Street and various properties in the South West Govanhill area.

Ken MacDougall Retires After

At the end of April Ken MacDougall retired as Head of Development & Regeneration Services after an incredible 39 years with the Association. We asked him for some of his reflections from his time in Govanhill.

Govanhill must have been a very different place in the 1980s, what do you think has changed the most in the time you have worked with the Association?

‘People forget what it was like in the late 70s and early 80s, Govanhill was just an array of blackened tenements, some of the conditions were horrific, no hot running water, homes with no proper bathroom or kitchen, closes with no doors – there were even outside toilets on half-landings’

‘It was the same for a lot of inner-city communities at the time but there was a lot of funding made available for communities like Govanhill to improve the area. The Housing Association movement was young, but it was an inspiring time. We bought whole portfolios of properties from private landlords and trusts, and some owner occupiers. It was a bit like the South West Govanhill Project, with the Council designating the tenement blocks Housing Action Areas for Improvement. This rolling programme of tenement improvements continued until around 2004 when the funding for this type of work stopped’

‘After 2004 we worked on a lot of newbuilds, and of course the conversion of the former Royal Samaritan Hospital. In 1991 the Association founded Govanhill Community Development Trust, which contributed to the social, economic and environmental regeneration and developed workspace and office facilities to host organisations like Sistema and Playlist for Life.’

In many ways the Association was responsible for saving the tenements from the bulldozers. The committee, local residents and owners took advantage of what was on offer and changed the face of the area, people kept the community together – unlike what happened in other parts of the city’

It must have felt like you had come full circle with the South West Govanhill Project?

‘Yes, it did. That is the best way of putting it. The South West area was never improved during the initial phase and had gone into a spiral of decline because of a lack of investment, mostly from private landlords. The South West Project to bring tenements into the Association’s control has been like the rehabilitation work completed in the rest of Govanhill decades earlier.’

You have led on so much important work during your time with the Association, from your involvement in the redevelopment of the Samaritan Hospital, your work with Govanhill Community Development Trust, numerous other development and regeneration projects and of course the South West Govanhill initiative. Is there any part of your work that you are most proud of?

‘The mixed-use redevelopment and conversion of the former Royal Samaritan Hospital was a real highlight – a jewel in the crown of the Govanhill regeneration story. It was a real leap of faith by the Committee at the time when the hospital came up for sale but the Association was determined to purchase it for the benefit of the community. Fortunately, we were successful in our bid and the rest is history. It took 10 years to complete and it provided many challenges, keeping it secure and water tight – but it is now a shining example of restoration, preservation and sustainable development.’



Nearly 40 Years in Govanhill

That said, there is a real sense of pride in every newbuild project you complete, because you know that people are getting to move somewhere that is better than where they were. The newbuild developments enable the Association to provide a better mix and type of housing, with larger houses for families where possible.'

What do you think you will miss most about Govanhill or the Association?

Working in an area for so long I will miss going there every working day. I will miss colleagues and committee members and engaging with local people.

I will miss going to Nans for my lunch!

What do you hope for the community of Govanhill for the future? If you come back in 10 years for a roll at Nan's, what would you like to see?

I hope that Nan's dairy is still going!

I would like to see that there hasn't been any decline in what has been achieved and that the Association is still going strong and continuing to achieve its vision with local people leading.

I would like to see that Govanhill is still as vibrant and diverse a community as it is now, and that people still want to live there, work there and play there.

This month we also said goodbye to David Grigor who has retired after 10 years service working in our Merrylee office, and earlier in the year to Billy Cassidy who has worked for the Association for 9 years as a maintenance officer.

Everyone at the Association wishes Ken, David, and Billy a long and happy retirement.

Care and Repair Free Handy Person Service Returns to Full Service

All Govanhill Tenants where all members of the household are aged 65 or over or have a disability can access a free handyperson service through Glasgow Care and Repair.

During the national lockdown this service was restricted to urgent work, however from the 4th of May full service was resumed.

This means they are happy to help with jobs like changing curtains, putting up shelves and pictures as well as more urgent work such as grab rails.

If you would like to access this service call **0141 433 2749**

This service is free! Payment is only required for materials.

The Handyperson provides practical assistance by carrying out small repairs and tasks around the home.

They can:

- ✓ Hang curtains
- ✓ Change light bulbs / toilet seats
- ✓ Install wireless door bells / smoke detectors

- ✓ Fit shelves, bannisters, towel rails, grab hand rails
- ✓ Supply install key safes to allow easy access for family carers
- ✓ Prepare the home for works such as central heating or medical equipment being delivered

They cannot

- ✗ Do painting and decorating
- ✗ Gas, plumbing or electrical work
- ✗ Do cleaning or gardening.

Democracy: Put to Our Elected Members

At the time of writing the election campaign was well underway with local candidates competing to get your votes.

Now the results are in, we want to give you the opportunity to put your questions to our elected members, a selection of which will

be published in our next Housing Association Newsletter.

To ask a question email **Checkin@govanhillha.org** with the ELECTED MEMBER QUESTION in the subject heading.

Local Democracy: Other Ways to Have your Say!

Join your Local Community Council

Community Councils are elected from among residents and exist to promote their area and help to make it a better place to live. They are strictly non political and exist to promote the interests of local people.

Govanhill

If you live in Govanhill you can get involved with the Crosshill and Govanhill community council by emailing **contact@crosshillandgovanhill.org.uk**

You can also find them on Facebook at **facebook.com/cgcommcouncil**. More information about how to get involved can also be found at their website : **crosshillandgovanhill.org.uk**.

Merrylee

Cathcart and district community council are also active on Facebook – search ‘Cathcart and District Community Council’ to find their page.

Prior to the pandemic they met on the last Wednesday each Month in the Couper Institute at 7.00pm.



your Questions Members

Get involved with: Thriving Places and the Govanhill Locality Plan

Thriving Places is a strategy by Glasgow Community Planning Partnership aimed at bringing people together to help improve the quality of life in Govanhill and 9 other areas of Glasgow.

One of the main goals of the strategy is to create a Locality Plan for the neighbourhood. A Locality Plan is a vision for the future that helps local people and organisations to get involved in decision making at a neighbourhood level.

A locality plan is written by the people, for the people.

The Govanhill Locality Plan has 11 different strands:

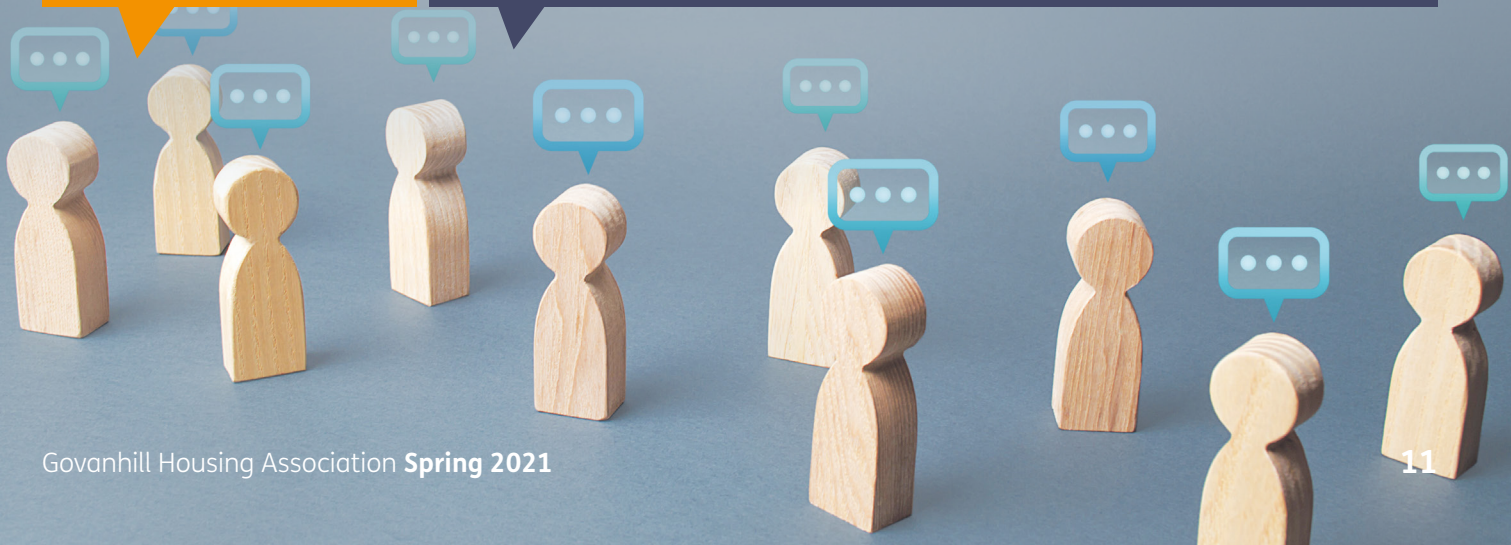


Get Involved

Keep an eye out on **www.govanhill.info** and the Thriving Places Govanhill Facebook page for updates about what we're working on and opportunities to have your say in community surveys.

Latest News

The recent survey about the Community Engagement and Information Strategy has now finished, and the results will be released in various formats from June onwards. Guided by a group of young people in Govanhill, we are now working on the Youth strand and will be releasing a community survey soon.



How to Contact our Staff

By Phone

Repairs

Please contact us on **0141 636 3669**, **0141 636 3634** or **0141 636 3654** to arrange.

Welfare Rights

The Association has support available for tenants who need to apply for benefits or Universal Credit. Please phone our welfare rights team on 0141 636 3686 or email **welfarerights@govanhillha.org** if you require assistance.

Rent

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

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 Sima Morodi in the first instance on 0141 636 3653

Lorraine Jennings: 0141 636 3672

Our offices remain closed, but the Association is open. Please use one of the following methods to contact us. **By Email: You can contact the Association by email at checkin@govanhillha.org**

Housing Staff

If you are unsure who your housing officer is, please refer to our website.

Avril Stewart	Housing Services Manager	0141 - 636 - 3655
Margaret-Ellen Gunn	Senior Housing Officer	0141 - 636 - 3650
Gordon Hill	Senior Housing Officer	0141 - 636 - 3645
David Sherwood.....	Housing Officer	0141 - 636 - 3683
Patricia Moran	Housing Assistant.....	0141 - 636 - 3671
Debbie McInally	Housing Officer	0141 - 636 - 3651
Philip Smith.....	Housing Officer	0141 - 636 - 3667
Mandy Devlin.....	Housing Assistant.....	0141 - 636 - 3681
Tahira Naveed	Housing Assistant.....	0141 - 636 - 3649
Katy Bridgestock.....	Housing Officer	0141 - 433 - 2146

Factoring Team

Sandy Thomson.....	Factoring Manager	0141 - 636 - 3679
Heather Batchelor	Factoring Officer	0141 - 636 - 3673
Ruby Khosla	Factoring Assistant.....	0141 - 636 - 3666
Matthew Cameron	Property Assistant	0141 - 433 - 2157