

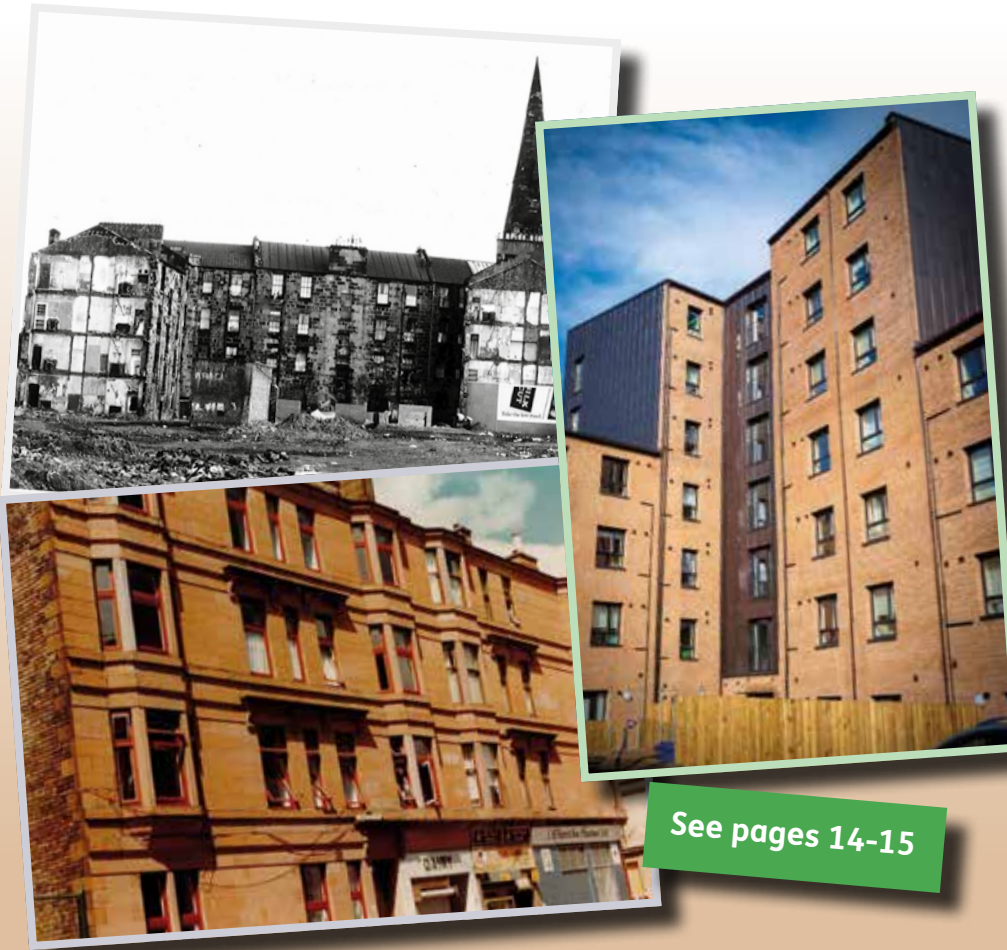
GOVANHILL NEWSLETTER



The Newsletter of Govanhill Housing Association

Spring 2024

Looking Back at 50 Years of Govanhill Housing Association



See pages 14-15

As part of our 50th Anniversary we have been looking back at some of the ways that Govanhill has changed over the years. If you want to share your own memories, please contact us at checkin@govanhillha.org with the subject heading '50 years'.

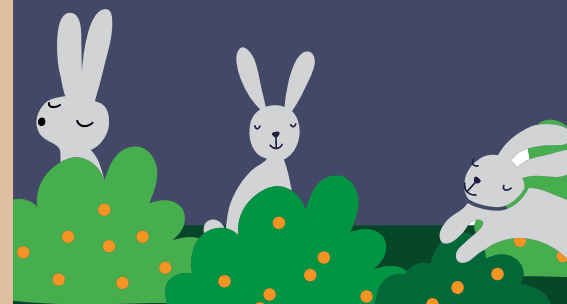
Easter and Spring Bank Holiday Office Closures

The Association Offices will close for the easter break on **Thursday the 28th of March** at 5pm and Re-Open on **Tuesday the 2^d of April** at 9am.

The Office will also be closed on **Monday the 6th of May** for the Mayday bank holiday and on **Friday the 24th of May** and **Monday the 27th of May** for the Spring Bank Holiday Weekend.

If you need any assistance during these closures, please phone one of our out of hours numbers below:

- Tenant Emergency Heating Repairs: City Technical Services on 0333 202 0708
- Tenants Health and Safety Emergency Internal Repairs: MEARS on 0203 5893140
- Other Emergency Repairs: Pointer Call Handling Service on 0141 552 8647.



Letter From our Chair

Welcome to this Spring edition of the Govanhill Housing Association Newsletter, the first in our 50th Anniversary year



The Association started the year with the sad news of the death of our former Chair John McLardie. John passed away on the 31st of December 2023, after years of dedicated service to both Govanhill Housing Association and the wider housing movement.

John chaired the Management Committee from November 2013 to September 2018 and again from September 2022 to

September 2023 following a leave of absence from May of that year.

John was an excellent Chair, seeing both sides of an argument and helping to reach a consensus even on tough decisions. He was an asset to the Association and while we will sorely miss his presence, we are extremely grateful for the time he invested in us, and the valuable contribution that he made. Aside from this, he was simply a lovely, friendly, caring man and we will all miss him on a personal level.

Looking ahead, spring is a time of renewal, and we look forward to celebrating this year with several events as part of our 50th Anniversary year.

We also look forward to improvements to our estate management and environmental services, which are detailed in this newsletter, along with an interview with our contractor John O'Connor.

We hope that you find

the information in this Newsletter useful. If you have any questions or comments do get in touch by emailing **checkin@govanhillha.org** with the word 'Newsletter' in the subject line.

Cheryl Miller



Meet Our New Resident Engagement Assistant

The Association is very pleased to welcome our new Resident Engagement Assistant, Gillian Scott, who joined the Tenancy Services Team in January.



Gillian previously worked for Govanhill Community Development Trust in the role of employability worker where she ran a drop-

in at the Larkfield Centre, and supported people into work in a variety of ways. Gillian also has previous experience of working in Housing Associations.

Gillian says 'It is an exciting time to be joining the team at the Association, with so much planned for the 50th Anniversary. I am enjoying the role so far and looking forward to meeting and engaging with residents in the year ahead.'

If you want more information about how to get involved with the Association you can contact Gillian at gscott@govanhillha.org.

Govanhill Community Development Trust Secures Funding to Tackle Cost of Living Crisis



GCDT has been successful in securing a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund to support local people affected by the ever-rising cost of living.

The Trust will be appointing two family support workers later in Spring who will work with local people to reduce costs, increase household incomes, and develop better money management skills.

Alongside this, GCDT will create accessible information for people who do not have English as a first language and support people who are digitally excluded to enable them to better participate in their community, access services and live better, healthier lives.

For more information about this work contact dzabiega@govanhillha.org





Your Rent and Services for 2024/25

During January 2024 we began our rent consultation for the new rent charges from 1 April 2024. This consultation takes place every year and the results are provided to the Management Committee who decide what level of increase to apply.

We understand that rent increases can be unwelcome, however, to continue to invest in our properties and the environment, as well as to keep up with inflation and cover our costs, it is necessary to increase what the Association charges.



How Does the Management Committee Decide What Level of Rent Increase to Apply?

When considering rent levels, an annual budget is presented to the Management Committee for approval. This budget includes the costs of the work we plan to deliver, including kitchens, bathrooms, windows, roof replacement, gas boilers etc. In 2024/25 we expect to spend around £18million on repairing, maintaining and improving our stock as well as acquiring new properties.

When considering the proposed increase, the CPI (Consumer Price Index) figure for the previous September is used. This is also the figure the Department of Works and Pensions uses in their calculation of benefits rates. These benefits will rise by 6.7% in April 2024. The

basic and new State Pension will increase by 8.5% from April 2024.

In deciding the increase for this year, the Management Committee considered tenant feedback, rent affordability, rent increases of other local landlords. They also considered the impact of cost increases on materials and services. The Management Committee debated the decision and came to an agreement on a rent increase of 7.7% which all tenants were notified of on the 28th February.



What were the Results of the Consultation Process?

The Association used three methods to consult with tenants, a paper survey, a digital survey, and an open meeting. We sent 2569 letters by post in January, and we received 305 responses, which is 12% of all tenants.

The options for a rent increase in the Survey conducted represented

- An increase similar to inflation and last year's rise (6.7%)
- An increase that would allow the Association to deliver works tenants have asked for (7.7%)

- An increase that gives the Association more options to further improve its homes to meet quality standards in the future (8.7%)

Unsurprisingly, most of the tenants who took part in the survey showed a preference for the lowest increase of 6.7%. However, given that that was below what we needed for the Business Plan projections to carry out required works in our properties and environment, a minimum increase of 7.7% is needed and that was agreed on.

More detail on the consultation result can be found in the table below.

Postal and Survey Monkey Combined Results			
	Returns	Base	Return Rate
	305	2569	12%
No Option	8	305	3%
7.70%	51	305	17%
6.70%	228	305	75%
8.70%	18	305	6%
Totals	305	305	100%

Continues overleaf...

Your Rent and Services for 2024/25

Continued

How does the Association work out Whether Rents are Affordable?

We use the Housing Needs and Demands Analysis guidance which states that rents are considered affordable if a household pays no more than 25% to 35% of their income on housing costs. Most social landlords test affordability using an income to rent test of 25% to 30%.

What About Service Charges?

In response to demands from tenants, we are introducing enhanced services in both close cleaning and estate maintenance. Most residents will now receive services including close cleaning and bulk uplifts. These are included as a separate charge; however, we aim to incorporate these in the rent from 2025/26.

Please look out for our Environmental newsletter in the coming months that will detail all the actions we are taking to improve the environment.

Is there anything else I need to know?

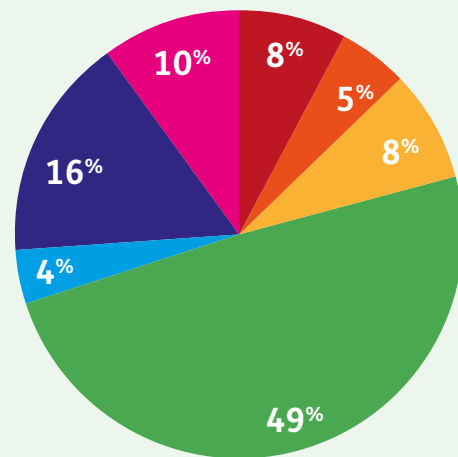
The second year of our 5-year phased rent re-structuring has been included in the rent review. This is an important change as we address the historical inconsistencies in charges.

What about Value for Money?

In this consultation, 66% of Tenants feel the rent is good value for money.

How does the Association Spend my Rent Money?

Most of your rent (70%) is spent on repairing, maintaining or improving properties in Govanhill.



Your Consultation Questions Answered!

We received several questions during the consultation process, please find the Association's response below.

If you are interested in being part of the rent consultation process, please contact Gillian our Resident Engagement Assistant on gscott@govanhillha.org

You Asked

Our Response

Can we have cleaner and better maintained back courts?

- We have started a new estate maintenance contract for back courts with a higher specification than before.
- We hold monthly meetings with the contractor to ensure that the work is carried out to the specified standard
- We are working with contractors and GCC to tackle pest infestation
- We have prioritised the removal of high-risk trees
- We have started new tenant events to ensure tenancy obligations are understood and are made clear in relation to waste management
- An Environmental Action Plan has been put in place with input from our Environmental working group

Can closes be kept cleaner and maintained to a higher standard?

- We have started a new close cleaning contract to clean the landings, stairs and windows with contractors working to a higher specification.
- Monthly meetings are taking place with the close cleaning contractor to ensure that the work is carried out to the specified standard

Can we have more consultation regarding the rent increase?

- We have set up regular tenant meet-up sessions where tenants can meet staff members to discuss issues such as rent, services and give their opinions.
- You can have your details logged on our tenant and resident engagement register where you can get involved in consultations
- You can become a member of the housing association which allows you to stand for the Management Committee and have a significant input to the way we operate. Membership is open to our tenants, Govanhill and Merrylee residents and others who share our aims and objectives. Membership forms are available on our website at www.govanhillha.org.

Paying Your Rent

For the Association to continue to provide services, it is vital that charges are paid in full and on time, *(on or before the 1st of each month in advance)* This is our main source of income and without this we cannot provide our services and maintain your homes.

How can I pay my rent?

There are many ways to pay your rent – the easiest way is by direct debit.

Other ways you can pay include

- The Post Office
- Any shop displaying the Paypoint Sign
- Standing Order from a bank or building society.
- Debit card payment via **www.allpay.net** or via their app

Tenants on a Direct Debit will have this updated by the Association, however if you pay by standing order, you will need to update this with your bank.

If you are on Housing Benefit or Universal Credit

We have updated the Housing Benefit Office for those tenants that we receive benefit directly. If you receive Universal Credit, it is your responsibility to notify the Department of Work and Pensions, and you will need to update your UC journal with your new monthly charge information on 1 April 2024. If you need assistance doing this, please contact us and we will be happy to help with this.

If you are struggling with the cost of Living: We are Here to Help

We offer support to tenants who may be struggling in any way with paying monthly charges or with the cost of living. Please contact us as soon as possible if you are worried about this.

You can contact our Welfare Rights Team can be contacted by emailing **welfare.rights@govanhillha.org** or by telephoning **0141 636 3636**. They can make sure that you are receiving everything that you are entitled to.



Property Services Update

First Tenants to Move into Butterbiggins Development by Summer

As previously reported the Association is acquiring 60 flats from Link Housing Association who are building on the former Larkfield Bus Garage site in Butterbiggins Road.

There have been several delays which were outwith the developer's control, however we expect the first 15 flats to be handed over to the Association for letting around the end of May, with the remainder to be let by the end of 2024.

Also, on Butterbiggins Road, the Association is seeking to build 24 units at the former artillery store site, but this has been delayed by planning consent prior to the building work beginning. The Association continues to press for this consent to be granted and is ready to progress with the development once planning is fully approved.



Refurbishment Projects are Moving Forward

The Association continues to make progress with common repairs in South West Govanhill, and funding is in place for the owners involved. Any flats acquired in these closes will be brought up to standard at the same time as the essential common repair work.

Other properties that the Association has acquired in Southwest Govanhill are currently being prepared for energy improvement works.

The Association Acquires Properties for Social Let on Albert Road

Work has started on flats we have acquired for social let at 127/129 Albert Road. We have also received consent to do a large mid terrace upgrade also in Albert Road.

Continues overleaf...

Property Services Update

Continued

Structural Works Underway on Cathcart Road

On Cathcart Road the Association has 21 flats undergoing structural work and refurbishment, which includes internal wall insulation, new kitchens, bathrooms and heating systems.

These should be complete by the end of 2024; of these 17 flats will be being available for new lets after four tenants return to their homes.



Association Participates in Retrofit Project with Glasgow City Council

As part of the Cathcart Road refurbishment, the Association is also participating in one of the Council's pilot retrofit projects using

alternative zero emission heating and heat recovery systems in three flats which will be evaluated by Strathclyde University.

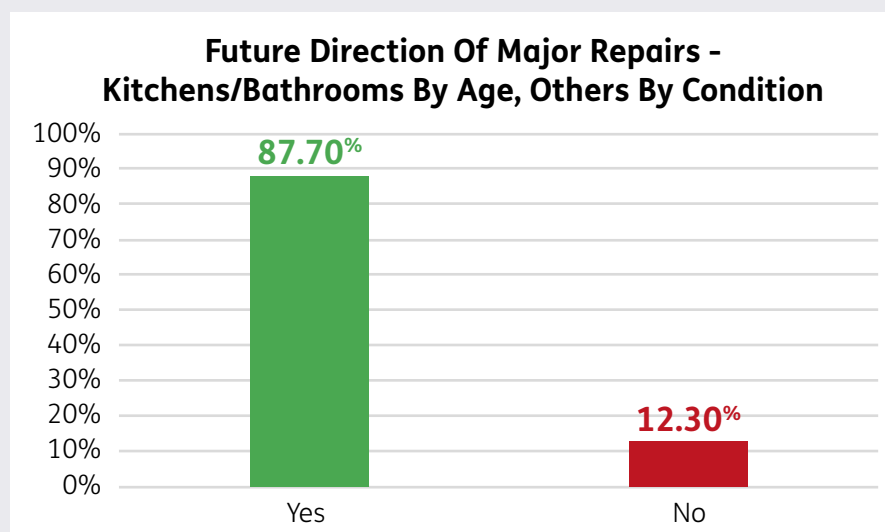
Consultation on our Major Repairs Programme: What you told us.

Last year we consulted all our tenants on the direction of our major repairs programme. 12% of tenants responded.

We asked whether we should replace Kitchens and Bathrooms based upon their age or based upon their condition.

Of those who expressed an opinion we received overwhelming support to renew kitchen and bathrooms by age and all other components by their condition in the future. This allows us to make best use of funds and target investment where it matters.

If you would be interested in participating in focus groups around our major repairs programme, please contact us.

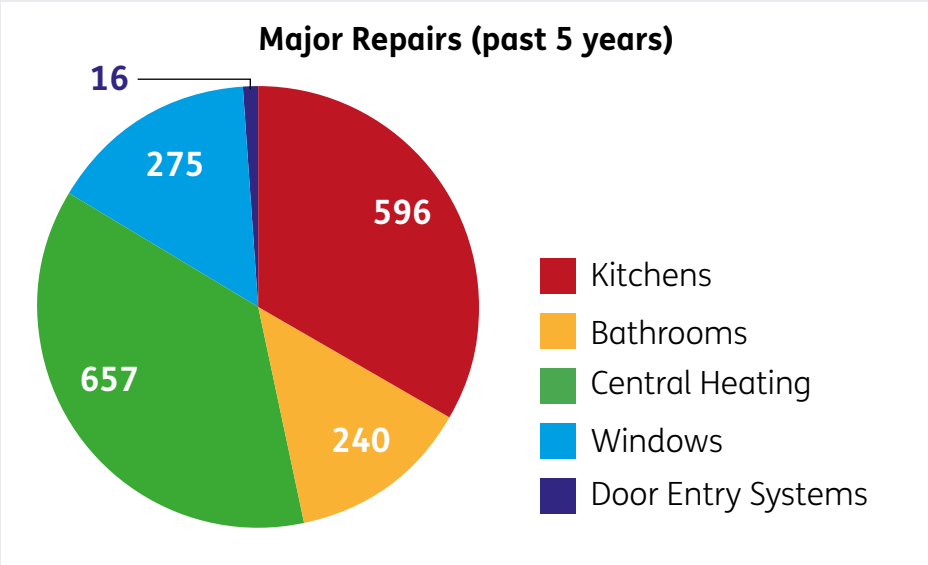


Major Repairs Stats: What the Association has Invested in Your Homes

Over the last five years the Association has made the following improvements to tenants' homes.

The chart opposite shows the numbers of kitchens, bathrooms, and central heating systems we have replaced or upgraded during this time.

We continue to invest your rent money in improving tenants' homes. The Association is hoping to move forward with a large-scale Kitchen and Bathroom programme starting in early 2025. This will follow on from this year's replacement programme.



When it comes to investment, the Association is continually seeking the best value for money from tenants' rents. This year we are going out to

tender for several different contracts within our Property Services Department to ensure we are getting the best possible value for money.

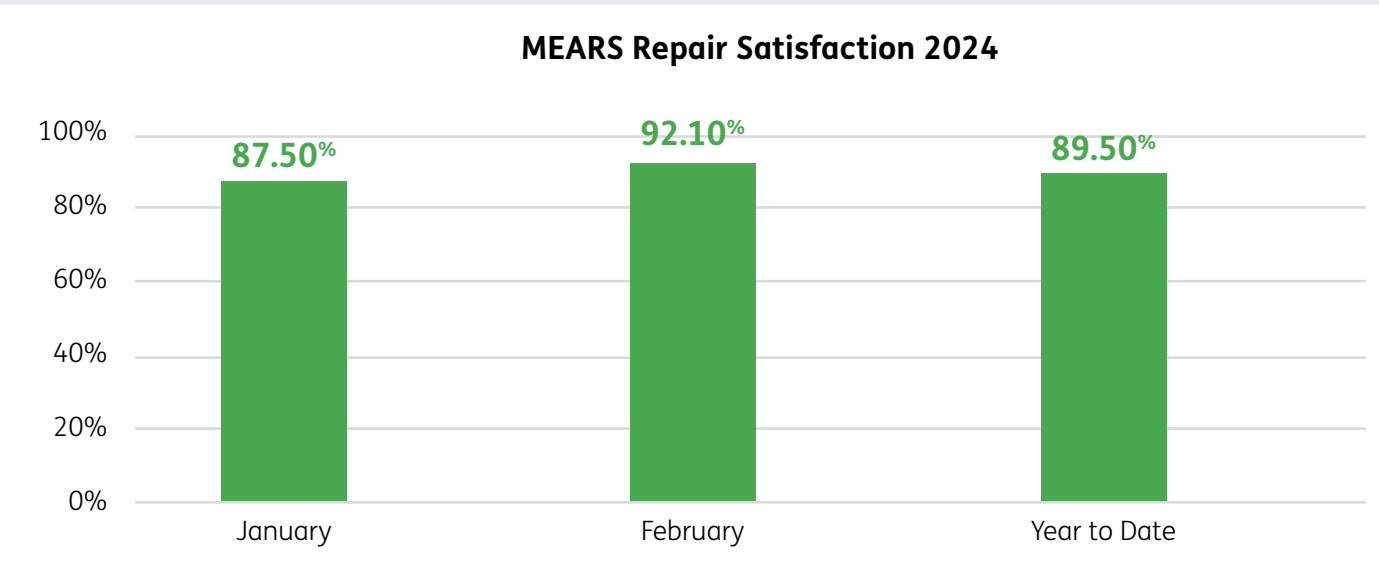
General Repairs: Tenant Satisfaction is up!

Day to day repairs is a key element of keeping tenant's homes up to standard. We are collecting tenant's feedback as part of this year's Satisfaction Survey at present.

In the first half of this operational year, we completed 1,377 emergencies with an average completion of 2.09 hours compared with 2.38

hours in the previous year and 1,427 non-emergency repairs in an average of 6.48 days against 7.38 days in 2022/23.

Our main contractor MEARS reported satisfaction levels in the first two months of this year at 89.5% which shows signs of improvement.



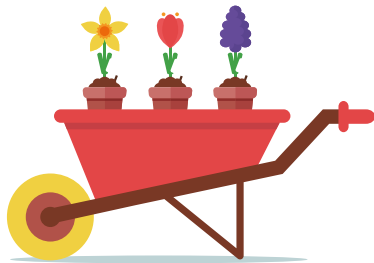
Support Available for Green Fingered Tenants!

This year, as well as recognising beautiful gardens within our community through our annual

Gardening Awards, the Association has decided to support tenants who are keen to improve their outdoor space. We have gardening kits to give away for those of you looking to get out into your gardens this spring.

In addition to giving away gardening kits, we are interested in finding out what you need for the growing season.

We can offer lessons in gardening, plants, seeds, tools, compost. Just let us know if gardening is something you would like to explore, and we will try to find a way to help you. Please email cchirilov@govanhillha.org

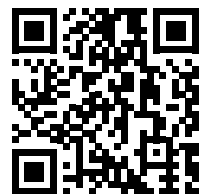


Funding Awarded to Tackle Fly Tipping

The Association has secured a £10,000 grant from Zero Waste Scotland and SEPA, to reduce fly tipping in Ardbeg and South Annandale Lanes. This money will be spent on improving lighting in the lanes, creating specially designed signage to deter offending and working with Public Health to report fly tippers.

We know that fly tipping is a persistent nuisance; you can support Glasgow City Council and the Association to tackle this issue by reporting fly tipping at www.glasgow.gov.uk/flytipping or using the QR code below!

If you are interested in being involved in taking action to stop fly tipping in your area, please contact Cristina at: cchirilov@govanhillha.org



Bin it to Win it! Glasgow City Council Offers Cash Prizes for Keeping Glasgow Tidy

Do you know that you can win a cash prize if you put your litter in the bin?

Glasgow City Council is working in partnership with LitterLotto and Keep Scotland Beautiful, to encourage more people to develop good habits and bin



their litter responsibly.

To be in with a chance to win, people aged 18+ can download the free LitterLotto app and upload a photo binning rubbish (street bin) via the app's camera function.

You could also be put into further cash prize draws which could see you with a chance of winning a Keep Scotland Beautiful Monthly



prize of up to £200 as well as the weekly LitterLotto UK £1000 pot.

To be in with a chance to win download the app at www.litterlotto.com.

Association Renews Commitment to Improving Estate Management

We spoke to Stephen Golder, operations manager at John O'Conner about his experience of working in Govanhill.

John O'Conner are going to be providing a range of services for Govanhill tenants, what can they expect to see?

We will be tidying back courts and, in some cases, maintaining front gardens. This will include things like cutting grass, keeping the weeds down, tidying rubbish, taking away bulk waste, sweeping paths and keeping the place as tidy as possible.

What are some of the good things about working in Govanhill and Merrylee?

Govanhill is a nice compact area to work in, some of our contracts are spread around a wide area, but the size of Govanhill and Merrylee means our guys don't have to travel around and can get on with the job.

Govanhill is an interesting place to work where every day is different. I would say Govanhill is almost like an old-fashioned community and quite a friendly place. We never have any problems with the people here, and that is not true of all areas we have worked in.



What are some of the challenges your operatives face?

Rubbish is a big challenge including getting the rubbish out from the back courts on to the streets. Parking can also be an issue, and it can be a challenge getting the vans where we need them to be. Tenements can be tricky; typical, old-style tenement based communities like Govanhill need a better rubbish disposal system.

How can our tenants support your operatives to make your job easier?

Generally use the bins properly, avoid leaving bags of rubbish sitting outside of the bins – though we know this can be difficult when the bins are full. Make sure you take care of your own things. Be aware that if we are out cutting the grass, it's helpful not to have toys or other garden items on the grass. Please pick up dog dirt! That is very unpleasant for us.

A great thing about working for John O'Conner is that we are still a family run business which puts family values at the heart of what we do, which I think shows in our approach to the work.

LOOKING BACK GOVANHILL HOUSING

1970s

At the start of the 1970s the Victorian sandstone buildings of Govanhill were in a sorry state. There was no hot water inside toilets or baths. In other areas of Glasgow, similar tenements were bulldozed, and communities were moved to estates on the city's fringes. A group of residents were determined that this would not happen in Govanhill, and this led to the formation of Govanhill Housing Association in 1974.



1980s

The 1980s was a period of growth for the Association as it continued to purchase and improve below standard properties in the area. In 1984 the Association officially opened its 1000th improved home, and in 1985 King (then Prince) Charles visited Govanhill.

2000s

During the 2000s the Association completed the redevelopment of Samaritan House, which won the prestigious Saltire Award. During this decade, the Association lobbied the newly formed Scottish Government to take action on substandard private rented housing in Govanhill.



2010s

During this decade funding was made available from National and Local Government for a project to target the area of Govanhill (South West Govanhill) most in need of action. Also in this decade the Association took ownership of 700 homes in Merrylee and Govanhill from Glasgow Housing Association (now Wheatly Group).

AT 50 YEARS OF ING ASSOCIATION



1990s

During the 1990s, the Association began looking towards the area's wider regeneration. It was in this decade that the Association formed a subsidiary organisation, the Govanhill Community Development Trust (GCDT).



2020s

The 2020s have presented new challenges for the Association, from supporting tenants with the impact of the covid pandemic to the ongoing impacts of Brexit. Despite this, the Association starts the decade in a strong position to tackle the challenges ahead.



New Workspace Tenants are 'More than just your average Building Company'

One of GCDT's newest commercial tenants, **Top Drawer** is an established ethical building and retrofitting company working across the southside of Glasgow (in Govanhill, Shawlands and Pollokshields). They told us how they intend to make working in trades welcoming for all.

At Top Drawer Construction we are committed to being more than just your average building company. With a commitment to both craft and community, our small local business is making waves through our dedication to upskilling its workforce and supporting marginalised individuals.

At the core of Top Drawer Construction's ethos is a belief in providing opportunities for all, especially those who may face barriers to employment. Through apprenticeships, we not only train individuals in the art of construction but also offer a pathway to a brighter future, particularly for refugees and asylum seekers.

In April, Top Drawer Construction is set to expand our reach even further with the launch of training courses at their new workshop in Govanhill. These courses aim to provide an introduction to the construction industry, equipping participants with practical skills essential for trades work and offering insight into potential careers.

From woodworking basics to mastering power tools and even DIY courses for folk eager to tackle projects themselves, these training programs cater to a diverse range of learners. By empowering individuals with skills and knowledge, we hope to make working in the trades a more welcoming space.

For more information you can follow Top Drawer on Facebook at www.facebook.com/topdrawerglasgow or contact Stevie at Stevie@topdrawer.scot



WORKSPACES TO RENT

Govanhill, Glasgow G42 8AT

- SUITABLE FOR OFFICE/STORAGE OR LIGHT INDUSTRIAL WORK/CREATIVE STUDIO
- FLEXIBLE LEASE TERMS TO SUIT YOU
- RENTAL PACKAGES MAY INCLUDE HEATING PLUS SECURE 24/7 ACCESS, PARKING
- SUPPORT FROM GCDT WITH NETWORKING & PARTNERSHIPS, IDENTIFYING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES, MARKETING



Contact Marie 07741 892 008 Email mmcbeth@govanhill.org

GCDT (Govanhill Community Development Trust) is a subsidiary of Govanhill Housing Association