

GOVANHILL NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of Govanhill Housing Association in Govanhill and Merrylee

Winter 2025



Christmas and New Year Opening Times

The office will be closed from 2pm on Wednesday the 24th of December and will open again on Tuesday the 6th of January.

We have split this into advice for tenants, and advice for factored owners.

Essential Phone Numbers:

Housing Association Tenants

(if you are a Private Tenant, please contact your landlord)

WHEN THE OFFICE IS CLOSED

Emergency Heating Repairs:

City Technical Services on 0333 202 0708

Health and Safety Emergency Internal Repairs:

MEARS on 0203 5893140

Other Emergency Repairs:

Pointer Call Handling Service on 0141 552 8647

WHEN THE OFFICE IS OPEN

For all general enquiries email checkin@govanhillha.org or phone 0141 636 3636

Repairs: phone 0141 636 3669, 0141 636 3634 or 0141 636 3654

Factored Owners

WHEN THE OFFICE IS CLOSED

Emergency Repairs: Pointer Call Handling Service on 0141 552 8647

Please note, this is for **Emergency Common Repairs only** if this number is used for private issues a charge may apply.

WHEN THE OFFICE IS OPEN

Email FactoringTeam@govanhillha.org

Phone 0141 636 3666 or 0141 636 3657

Have Your Say:

Rent & Service Charge Consultation for 2026/27

Govanhill Housing Association's Management Committee is reviewing the annual rent and service charges for 2026/27, which will take effect from 1 April 2026. We want to hear your views before any decision is made.



Why is this important?

Rent is our main source of income, and it ensures we can maintain homes, deliver essential services, and invest in improvements for the future. This year, we are also proposing to ringfence **£200,000** to tackle long-standing pest control issues in the community.

What is being proposed?

Our Business Plan requires annual rent increases of September CPI + 1% to keep homes safe and modern. **With September CPI at 3.8%, the proposed increase is 4.8%.**

This is lower than the **average increase of 5.5%** across sixteen other housing associations.

What does this mean to you?

The impact depends on the size of your home and current rent. The table below shows our average weekly rents by size of property, and what a 4.8% increase might look like.

Please note that these are average rents.

Increase (£)	New Rent	Current Rent	Apartment Size
£4.54	£99.16	£94.62	1 apt
£5.30	£115.79	£110.49	2 apt
£5.72	£124.84	£119.12	3 apt
£6.50	£141.87	£135.37	4 apt
£7.46	£162.80	£155.34	5 apt +

Rent Harmonisation

We are also consulting on ending our rent harmonisation process a year early. This process was initiated to ensure clarity across our rents. We are proposing ending this process early so that tenants can be sure of what their rent will be going forward.

There is still time to respond to our consultation

We held four in person consultation sessions in Govanhill and Merrylee in November and December, however there is still time to respond to our consultation.

You can either give your views by completing the survey we sent to you or by replying to the survey via text message.

Deadline for responses: 31st December 2025

We will notify you of your new charges at least four weeks before they take effect. If you need support with budgeting or benefits, our **Rent and Welfare Rights teams** are here to help.

Need help with Rent or Finances?

If you are struggling with money, please don't be embarrassed, the Association is here to help. Get in touch as soon as possible and we can look at how to maximise your income, or what extra help might be available.

Either speak to your Housing Officer or contact our Welfare Rights team by phoning **0141 636 3636** or by emailing welfarerights@govanhillha.org.uk.

Real Christmas Tree?

Collection Dates Confirmed as 7th and 9th January

If you have a real (ie not plastic) Christmas Tree, our contractors will collect it free of charge if you put it on the street on the 7th or 9th of January (please note, this is in Govanhill only).





Tenancy Sustainment:

Another Year of Tailored Support for Tenants

This initiative aims to provide support and resources to individuals and families in maintaining their tenancies. Thanks to the hard work of our team and the engagement of our tenants, the project has achieved some positive results, such as prevention of court actions, improving tenant wellbeing and fostering stronger community bonds by sign-posting tenants to support groups, creating a strong network of mutual assistance.

The team are currently working on 37 live cases and have closed 120 cases.

Specific Areas of Tenant Support

Disability

We support tenants who have health problems that can have an impact on housing stability. This might include struggling to manage household tasks, and personal hygiene.

This year we have completed needs assessments for a number of tenants. These assessments identify any barriers in the home and often result in a referral to Occupational Therapy.

This year we have supported disabled tenants with

- Independent Living
- Bathroom adaptations
- Equipment and aids to improve mobility
- Fitting of grab rails
- Installation of flashing light door entry systems
- Upgrading of carbon monoxide alarms
- Connecting tenants to community and Welfare Support (connection to local community resources and social services)

Mental Health and Hoarding

We have helped tenants this year struggling with mental health issues and hoarding. We work with tenants in a non-confrontational way to help them change their hoarding behaviour.

This process involves

- Regular home visits
- Support with decluttering methods and making a cleaning plan
- Assisting the tenant to dispose of unwanted refuse
- Sometimes assisting with the purchase of household items.

We also refer tenants to partner organisations such as mental health services, Social Work Direct (GCC).

Some of our successes this year have included

- Preventing an eviction where a tenant had breached their tenancy.
- Improving organisational skills of tenants.
- Improving well being and mental health by supporting tenants to reduce hoarding behaviour.

Whatever the situation, we tailor our services to the needs of the tenant. If you need a bit of extra support, there's no need to be ashamed. Talk to us; we are here to help.

Tenant and Resident Engagement End of Year–Round Up 2025

A Look Back at 2025 – Thank You for Being Part of It!

As the year draws to a close, we want to take a moment to celebrate all the ways that tenants and residents have engaged with the Association and the wider community throughout the course of the year.

Thank you for all your support and involvement, here's to more in 2026!

Your Voice Matters



This year, many of you took part in surveys and policy consultations. Your feedback has helped shape decisions and strengthen our community. This year you have taken part in many consultations on the following Association policies

- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Rent Management Policy
- Decant Policy
- Anti-social behaviour Policy
- Estate Management and Environmental Policy
- Pest Control Strategy

Thank you for making your voice heard!

Community Garden Events



This year we held two very successful events at the community Garden in Summer and Easter. We were blessed with good weather, and families came along and enjoyed a range of activities in our outdoor space.

A massive thank you to our community garden group for all your hard work this year!



Halloween Fun

Our Halloween party was a huge success! It was wonderful to see so many families join in the fun at Samaritan House.



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Launch of the Scrutiny Panel

We introduced a new Scrutiny Panel this year, meeting on the last Thursday of each month. This group is supported by Claire McGraw, Head of Tenancy Services and also received external assistance via Tenant Information Services (TIS). This group plays a vital role in ensuring transparency and accountability.

Interested in joining? Contact Gillian at gscott@govanhillha.org

Environmental Residents Group

The environmental residents group went from strength to strength this year and has had a real impact on the community. You can find out more about the Group in our Environmental update on pages 9 and 10.

Celebrating Community Heroes

On 27th November, the Association hosted an event at Jamieson Court to honour:

- Volunteers who make a difference
- Good Neighbour Award winners
- Gardening Award champions

Thank you to everyone who helps make our community what it is.



Poverty Awareness Week

From 6–13 October, Govanhill Housing Association hosted a series of free community events to support residents and challenge poverty. Highlights included knitting sessions at Jamieson Court, budgeting and money-saving workshops, DIY tips from MEARS contractors, and advice for housekeeping on a budget. The week concluded with a fun parent and carer event featuring arts, crafts, and lunch for families.

Thanks to everyone who joined us and to CAS Contract Cleaning for their support.



Festive Highlights

This Christmas the Association held 2 events as well as celebrating EID on the 27th of June earlier in the year.

All in all, another busy year for Tenant and Resident Engagement. If you would like to find out more about how to get involved with any aspect of the Association, please contact Gillian at gscott@govanhillha.org.

Tenant Guide:

What to do if you want to terminate your tenancy

If you decide to end your tenancy and leave your property, we will require the following from you. We hope to make the process as easy as possible, and if you have any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch or speak to your housing officer.

What You Need to Know

Notice Period: We require at least 28 days' written notice before you move out.

Joint Tenancies: If you're married, living with a partner as husband and wife, or have a joint tenancy, we'll also need their agreement to terminate.

Termination of tenancy in person

If you wish to terminate your tenancy in person, come into the office at Samaritan House and ask to speak to a member of staff. You will be asked to fill in a tenancy termination form, and a member of staff will be able to help you with this.

Before You Leave

To avoid any surprises, please make sure you:

- Leave the property clean, tidy, and in good decorative order.
- Remove all personal belongings (including any belonging to lodgers or sub-tenants).
- Return all keys to the housing office.
- Remove any fixtures or fittings installed without written permission and repair any damage.
- Clear any outstanding payments.

- Apply for any compensation you may be entitled to for approved improvements.
- Complete any repairs you're responsible for.
- Provide a forwarding address and the name of your gas and electricity suppliers.

A Housing Officer will need to complete a pre-termination inspection, please help us to find a convenient time for this. This is a really important visit and helps us to prepare for the property being returned to us.



LOOKING TO MOVE IN THE NEW YEAR? WHY NOT TRY A MUTUAL EXCHANGE WITH HOMESWAPPER!

As a social housing tenant, you are entitled to swap your home with someone else by mutual agreement.

Govanhill Housing Association has a Home Swapper Account for tenants. This means that if you wish to look for a mutual exchange, you can use their website free of charge.

What is a Mutual Exchange?

A mutual exchange is when two social housing tenants swap homes. It's a way to move home if you need more space, to move for work, or for family reasons — without waiting for the usual allocation process. It gives you more choice and control over where you live.

How do I look for a Mutual Exchange?

You will need to visit **www.homeswapper.me** to join the HomeSwapper website. Joining is simple; you just need a few details to get your account set up. Once all this is done, the Association will approve your account, and you can look for potential exchanges.

When you first register, you'll need to answer some questions about your home and the home you want. This creates your home advert and also lets you see homes you might like.

The **homeswapper.me** website has advice on how to do this, and will show you how to look for new properties.

What happens when I find a property?

Govanhill Housing Association will need to approve the exchange. There are a few reasons that we might refuse, for example if we have already begun eviction proceedings. Assuming this is not the case, we are likely to approve the exchange.

How can I find out more?

Visit **www.homeswapper.me**



Environmental Update

Association Contractors Lead Community Clear-Up

On November 4th, the Association partnered with contractors Greenerleaf, John O'Conner, and MEARS Group to tackle fly-tipping hotspots across three lanes in Govanhill. The initiative, delivered at no cost to tenants, forms part of the community benefits agreed within the contractors' service contracts.

Teams worked together to remove bulk waste, litter, and overgrown vegetation, while also addressing graffiti and pest issues. Whenever we procure services, we look for added value for our tenants; these clear ups form part of that added value.



Environmental Newsletter Delivered Across G42 Postcodes

This month, residents living in the G42 7 and G42 8 postcode areas will have received an Environmental Newsletter, with more news and stories about work going on to improve the local area. Look out for your copy!



Environmental Group Meetings for 2026

The environmental residents group meets quarterly at the Samaritan House Community Hall at 79 Coplaw Street from 6-8pm on the following dates.

- 27th January
- 28th April
- 25th August
- 24th November



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Litter Picks

Monthly litter picks are having a break over the festive period. Search **Govanhill Community Litterpick** on Facebook or **govanhill_litterpick** on **instagram**.



Missed Bin Collections



At the time of writing we did not yet know the timetable for bin collections over the festive period. If you notice that your bins have not been collected, please tell Glasgow City Council or Report it on the My Glasgow App.

Coming in 2026: Backcourt Improvements Funded by City Changemakers

Earlier this year we announced that Govanhill Housing Association successfully secured £25,000 in funding to improve backcourt areas within the community. This investment will help create safer, cleaner, and more welcoming spaces for residents.

In preparation for the move to street bin hubs, this project will look at how we can improve the back court areas. To ensure the changes reflect local needs, consultation will begin early in the new year. The Association will be working with other local organisations to go door-to-door to speak directly with residents and find out what their priorities are.

The consultation will ask residents about what matters most, whether that's cleaner waste disposal, better outdoor spaces, secure bike storage, or something else.

The backcourt improvement project will focus on the Backcourt around Cathcart Road/Alison Street/Hollybrook Street and Bankhall Street. If it proves successful, we hope to widen the project to include other closes.



Meet Laura Vroomen: Environmental Residents Group Member

We spoke to Laura about her involvement in the group and her hopes for 2026

'I moved to Govanhill about two years ago and when I first moved here, I realized quite early that while it was a great place to live, it was also a bit messy. The first thing I got involved with was litter picking in a back lane with the Association, which is where I met Cristina who invited me along to the environmental group.

I went along because I wanted things to be tidier.

Being involved in the group has helped me understand everything that goes into organizing a neighborhood. It's not just about telling people to recycle and use their bins properly. It's a complex situation involving individuals, businesses, the Association and of course Glasgow City Council.

Coming along to the group is always worth it, even just to meet your neighbours. I think if we get to know each other better, then we might want to put more effort into working on solutions together because of having a personal connection.

I would also encourage people to come along to the monthly Govanhill Community Litter Picks; they have such a nice atmosphere. I've met some wonderful people while litter picking, even though we all wish that litter picking wasn't necessary, as it's not a good long-term solution.

Ultimately, the only way anything will change is if everyone sits around the table to come up with solutions rather than pointing the finger.'



John Quinn Retires After 7 Years of Service

After eight years as Director of Govanhill Housing Association, John Quinn is retiring. During his time, John has overseen several new developments and supported the Association through the Covid-19 Pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis.

Reflecting on his time, John said:

'It has been a real privilege to work for the Association over the last 7 years.'

The role is one where no two days are the same, and you can make a real difference. I have really enjoyed serving the people of Govanhill and Merrylee'

We thank John for his work and wish him all the best in his retirement.



Association to Welcome Jennifer Cairns as our New CEO in 2026

Govanhill Housing Association is pleased to announce the appointment of Jennifer Cairns as our new Chief Executive Officer, starting in early 2026.

Jennifer brings over a decade of experience from West of Scotland Housing Association, including five years as Director of Corporate Services. She will lead the Association's mission to deliver high-quality housing and services for the Govanhill and Merrylee communities.

Commenting on her appointment, Jennifer Cairns said:

'I am delighted to be appointed Chief Executive of Govanhill Housing Association and build on the great work that has been delivered during John Quinn's time in the role. This role

at Govanhill Housing Association is an opportunity for me to lead the staff teams to continue to make a real difference to the people and communities in Govanhill and Merrylee. I am really looking forward to starting in the role and meeting my new colleagues, the Management Committee and Govanhill Housing Association customers'.



Our Development: Improving Outcomes in 2025 as we look to 2026

Repairs Performance April to September

Govanhill Housing Association completed **4,733 reactive repairs** between April and September 2025. Emergency repairs averaged **2.17 hours**, close to the target of 2 hours, and non-emergency repairs were completed in **7.08 working days**. Impressively, **99.8% of repairs were Right First Time**, and tenant satisfaction rose to **84%**, reflecting our commitment to quality service. Our full performance is available in the table below.

Scottish Average 2024/25	Govanhill HA Target	2025/26 Q1 -Q2	2024/25	Indicator
3.89 hours	2 hours	2.17 hours	2.13 hours	Emergency
9.13 working days	5 working days	7.08 working days	5.74 working days	Non-Emergency
88.02%	95%	99.8%	92.4%	Right First Time
87%	95%	84.0%	79.8%	Tenant Satisfaction

Safety First: Gas and Electrical Checks

All **1,621 gas** and **274 electrical safety checks** were completed on time, ensuring tenant safety and compliance with legal requirements. We thank all tenants for their cooperation in providing access for these essential checks.

Tackling Damp and Mould as we Prepare for Awaab’s Law

The Scottish Government will introduce a version of Awaab’s Law next year, focusing initially on damp and mould issues but expanding later to cover other hazards. Govanhill Housing Association is ready for this change; our maintenance team is well trained, and we have robust reporting processes in place.

If you notice damp or mould, please report it promptly.

Our Performance on Damp and Mould April – September

- **Average resolution time:** 27 working days
- **Reopened cases:** None
- **Live cases:** 33

Early reporting helps us act quickly and effectively. Thank you for your cooperation!

Who was Awaab Ishak?

Awaab’s law was created in response to the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak, who died in 2020 of a severe respiratory condition which was the result of prolonged exposure to mould in his home.

Coming in 2026!

New Build & Major Repairs

In 2026 we look forward to new developments as well as significant improvements to our existing homes.

- **159 Butterbiggins Road:** Completion expected late Spring
- **Forsyth House:** We are looking to develop 15 new social homes on the site; these are currently in the design stage.
- **Kitchen & Bathroom Programme:** 1,800 homes to receive upgrades over five years.

Major Repairs: Kitchen & Bathroom Programme

We're moving forward with an ambitious programme to upgrade kitchens and bathrooms across **1,800 homes** over the next five years. This investment ensures our properties remain modern, safe, and comfortable for all tenants.



Pilot project locations

- **Boyd Street:** Tenders are being evaluated to renew **64 bathrooms** and **23 kitchens**, with work starting this winter.
- **Merrylee:** Surveys are nearly complete for **85 kitchen renewals** and **2 bathrooms**. Pricing will be sought early in the new year for a site start in the Spring.

Adapted Bathroom Conversions

Through our partnership with MEARS, **31 older adapted bathrooms** are being converted back to standard bathrooms or upgraded to new shower rooms. These works are scheduled for completion by **January 2026**.

Progress So Far

By the end of September, our Maintenance Team had arranged or completed:

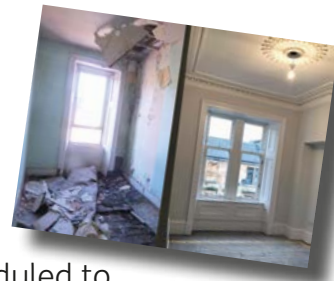
- 23 bathroom renewals
- 19 kitchen renewals

This programme reflects our commitment to improving living standards and delivering high-quality homes for our tenants.

South West Govanhill Acquisition and Repair Project

The project is entering its final phase, focusing on refurbishing acquired homes.

- **Major Repairs 6 Contract:** Tenders are being assessed, with work starting this winter.
- **97 Westmoreland Street:** Upgrades scheduled to begin in Spring 2026.
- We are also working closely with the City Council to complete a number of Voluntary and Statutory Common Essential Repair Schemes.



More Apprenticeships with MEARS! Providing Jobs for Local People

Following a successful first year with our two local apprentices, MEARS are in the process of arranging college places for two or three new apprentices next year.

These places will be reserved for people from Govanhill or Merrylee.

If you would like more information about the MEARS apprenticeship, please email **Alan.Semple@mearsgroup.co.uk**

The apprenticeships will be advertised on the Govanhill Housing Association Website and Facebook when the application process commences in 2026.



Govanhill Community Development Trust

Wishing a Merry Christmas and happy new year to our commercial tenants.



In 2025 we warmly welcomed SEIN, Glass Performance and Dynamo Glasgow CIC. We said goodbye to Music Broth and Turning Point.

Govanhill Workspace (69 Dixon Road)

Glasgow South East Foodbank/ SP Social Care Ltd /Women on Wheels/Magic Mirror Studio/ Active Life Club/ YCSA /Glass Performance/ Glasgow Food Train/The Communist Party of Britain / Unity Books /AAA Freight Services Ltd / Bikini Lists Ltd

Victoria Court (1-9 Hollybrook Place)

Victoria Road Carpets/Top Drawer/Minuteman Press /CM Framing & Partitions Systems Ltd Olivia Taylor / Studio South /Dynamo Glasgow CIC /ABACUS Model Makers/Paul Robertson/GAS (Glasgow Autonomous Space)

Samaritan House (79 Coplaw Street)

Govanhill Law Centre/South East Integration Network

2025 Highlights From our Commercial Tenants

Many of our tenants have done incredible work in the community this year. Here are a few selected highlights, reflecting just a portion of what our tenants have achieved.

Women on Wheels

www.womenonwheels.org.uk

This year, Women on Wheels worked with over **1,600 women and families**, offering cycling lessons, bike rides, maintenance classes, mountain biking, BMX, and social events. They have even moved to a larger unit at Govanhill Workspace to meet demand. Their recent **Ride Bright** event saw **130 women cycling through the streets with lights**, promoting road safety at night.



YCSA

<https://ycsa.org.uk/>

YCSA supports BME, asylum-seeking, and refugee young people (ages 10-25) through 1:1 support, art psychotherapy, social activities, and ESOL classes. This summer included beach trips, loch visits, travelling saunas, and residential weekends. In November, they hosted a popular Alternative Guy Fawkes community event. Their boxing group now runs Saturday sessions at The Ark, and the Safe to Grow project continues to provide vital 1:1 support.



Active Life Club

<https://activelifeclub.org/>

Celebrating **26 years**, Active Life Club empowers young people through sports, outdoor adventures, creative arts, and volunteering. Highlights of 2025 include winning the **Community Impact Award** at the Scottish Impact Awards, staff member Inaya Uddin named **Young Coach of the Year**, and Chair Raza Sadiq shortlisted for **Unsung Hero** at the Glasgow Sport Awards.



Add it to your list: sign-up for our tenant portal!

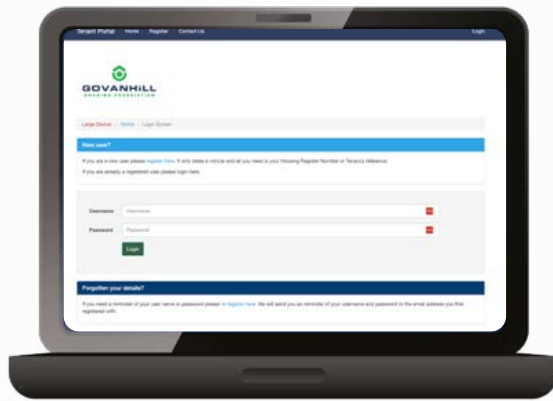
Managing your rent has never been easier. With our Tenant Portal, you can:

- View your rent account balance
- Check recent payments and charges
- Update your contact details

Why use the portal?

- It's **quick, secure, and available 24/7**
- No need to call or visit the office
- Stay in control of your account

Sign up today on our website and login with your details, if you need help, please get in touch with our team on **0141 636 3636**.



GOVANHILL JOB CLUB

EVERY THURSDAY 10AM TO 3PM

LARKFIELD CENTRE
39 INGLEFIELD ST
GLASGOW G42 7AY



GCDT
GOVANHILL COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT TRUST

CONTACT US TODAY!

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HUGH O'HAGAN

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Please Contact Us At: Freepost Better Living

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Web: www.govanhillha.org

Email: checkin@govanhillha.org

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