



# West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative Ltd

Spring Newsletter 2017



## WWHC Energy Prices

### The ONLY thing **FROZEN....**is the price

West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative is delighted to announce that for the year 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018 WWHC are **freezing** tenants' energy costs for heat and hot water.

That means since the commencement of WWHC being the heat and hot water supplier in 2014 WWHC has **frozen** prices for 44 consecutive months. This at a time when big energy suppliers have announced their price increases of on average 11.5% for their energy supplies.

Scottish Power, Npower, EDF, Eon, First Utility and others have all announced large price increases, whilst the not-for-profit WWHC has once again frozen prices.



Independent Government figures show WWHC is now saving each tenant, using the district heating system a considerable sum of money, on average, on energy costs compared to the old electric white meter/panel heater system.

The WWHC prices charged to tenants could be even lower if The Scottish Government did not charge WWHC 3.5% interest each year on the loan it provided to help fund the scheme. Although the project had some initial teething problems WWHC is now delighted with the very high levels of tenant satisfaction with the system and the considerable savings benefitting tenants as a result of WWHC supplying heat and hot water on a not-for-profit basis.



Susan Anderson (pictured) said:

We are delighted to announce we are once again continuing our price-freeze on energy supplies to our 536 tenants/members, who are part of our district heating scheme, for the next year. People said we were brave when we took this project on, however we were convinced we could provide a state-of-the-art heating system and supply energy at a considerable cost saving to our tenants. Given the price rises by other providers, we have been proven correct.

## Hello to Martha



We would like to take this opportunity to welcome Martha Floyd who joined our Concierge team on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017. Martha will be with the Concierge team for a six month temporary contract (job share).

Martha has a wealth of experience in Concierge and sheltered housing and will be an asset to our current Concierge teams. Martha is looking forward to her time with West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative and serving the local community.

Please feel free to approach Martha when you see her out and about on the estate.

## Good luck Gail

Gail Anderson recently left the Resource Centre for new employment. Gail has worked for us for a number of years originally the Out of School Care and later as cleaner and receptionist. We wish Gail all the very best in her new job!



## MSFs Upgraded with Sky Q Connection Facility



The Co-operative has been in discussion with Sky Communications over the last few months regarding upgrading the current Sky 2 connection facility to Sky Q within the multi stories.

**Sky Q is Sky's** next-generation TV platform, bringing **Sky TV** to multiple rooms, screens and devices for a "fluid viewing" experience - complete with 4K Ultra HD content.

Upgrade work has recently been carried out which will allow tenants within the multi stories, if they wish, to contact Sky Communications to discuss upgrade connection and packages.

**The upgrade is for Multi-storey tenants only, currently, and we are in discussions with Sky about possible future connection facilities for the Low Rise properties.**

## Hello to our PhD Student - Andrew

I am Andrew Lyden, a PhD student from the University of Strathclyde, and I am going to be volunteering with WWHC to help understand and improve the supply of heat to homes in the community. I've been carrying out research in the area of community renewable energy for over a year and I hope to both build some practical experience and provide my own insights over the period of this mutually beneficial project. I will be digging into the nuts and bolts of the operation of the whole heating system with the aim answering a number of questions. Is the system providing homes with heat as efficiently as possible, and if not then what can be done to ensure it does?

What does the future hold for heating in this community, and what might this look like? WWHC provides me with a unique insight into a working low-carbon district heating project and an opportunity to experience first-hand a community which has come together to change the way heat can be delivered. Focussing on the people rather than on profits, WWHC provides a template which can be built-upon as an aspiration for other communities around the world.

## Rent Increase for 2017/18

Following an extensive consultation exercise with all our tenants/members The WWHC Management Committee, all of whom are tenant/members themselves, considered the rent position for 2017/18 at its meeting of 27th February 2017 and decided that a 2% rent increase was a prudent and the required course of action to meet the financial requirement of WWHC for this year. This decision was taken in light of CPI inflation running currently at 1.6% and RPI inflation currently running at 2.5% in the UK.



The Co-operative's philosophy to rent charges is to ensure we are providing the highest possible quality of services to our tenant/members at a rent which is reasonable, comparable and affordable. The Committee considered the rent rises of many similar housing organisations and the WWHC increase is lower or similar to most of those other organisations.

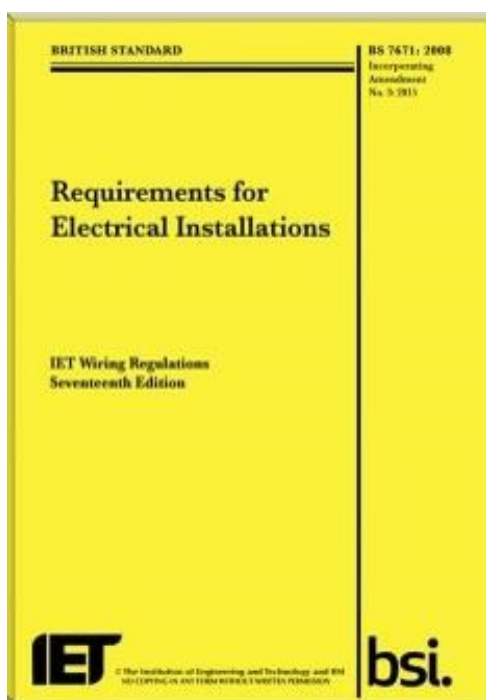
The Committee fully appreciates the financial difficulties some tenants/members are currently experiencing, caused by austerity, macro economic recessions and welfare benefit reform. Should you be experiencing any difficulty in meeting your rent payments, please contact your Housing Officer immediately who will be sympathetic and will endeavour to help you in any way possible.

## Alterations to Properties

The Co-operative would like to remind tenant/member(s) wishing to carry out alterations to their property that works **must not** start before The Co-operative has given written approval for the works as per your tenancy agreement.

Please request an application form from the office if you wish to carry out any of the following to your property:

- Alterations to fixtures and fittings in your home including: plumbing, electrical, bathroom fitments (including shower installations) and kitchen units;
- Replacement of external/internal doors;
- Erection of aerials and satellite dishes;
- Alterations to the layout of your property i.e. taking down an internal wall;
- Erection of sheds, garages or installation of vehicle hard standings.



There has been an increasing number of incidents where alterations have been carried out to the electrical wiring circuit and fitments which are non-compliant with the British Standard 7671 – Requirements for Electrical Installations. IET Wiring Regulations 17<sup>th</sup> Edition amendment 3.

e.g. Non standard light fitments have been installed without earthing: this could give an electric shock if the live wire inside an appliance came loose and touched the metal casing. Also, with some shower installations the wrong size of cable has been used and connected to the main electrical distribution board incorrectly.

The result being our electrical contractor requires to remove and make good non-compliant wiring and fitments and re-certify the property to the current standard. In such cases the cost of the work is rechargeable to the tenant/member(s).

### **Fire Safety Door between Living Room and Hallway:**

This door provides a half hour fire protection, when closed, between the bedrooms. This is to help provide time for evacuation in the event of a fire. These doors should not be removed - If you have removed them PLEASE reinstate immediately.

Smoke detectors are inspected annually to ensure they are operating correctly.

**Helping to keep you, your family and neighbours safe.**

Right to Compensation - if an **approved** alteration has been carried out which is deemed an improvement to the property this may fall under the Co-operative's Right to Compensation Policy when you terminate your tenancy.

You will be advised at the time of permission being granted for an alteration whether it qualifies under this policy.



## Low Rise Window Replacement Contract



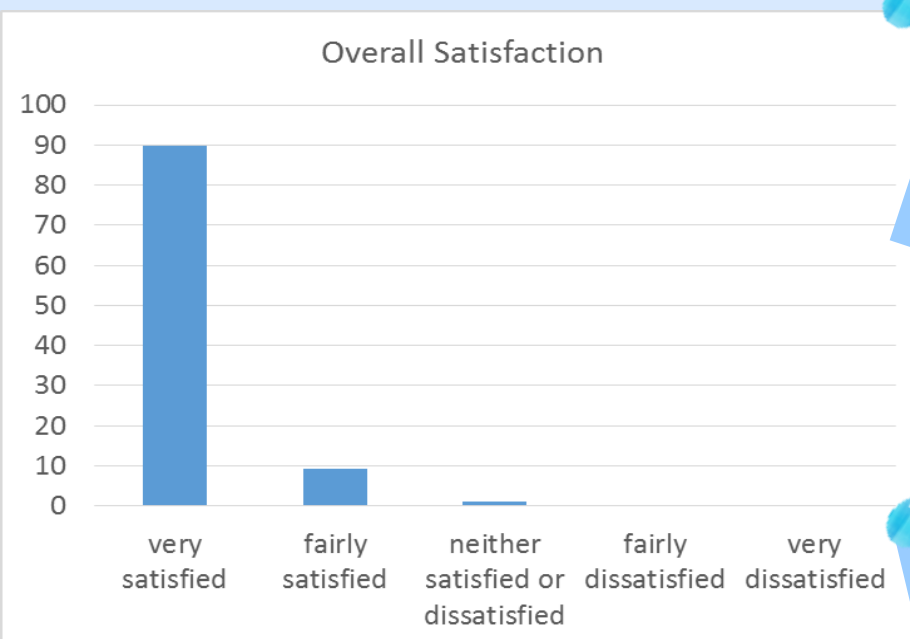
The Co-operative is delighted to advise that the window replacement contract was successfully completed on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017, which saw 109 properties installed with new PVC windows.



We would like to thank the tenant/members within the low rise properties for their co-operation in providing access and their preparation for the installation dates.

This enabled the contractor CMS Window Systems to progress the installations and complete works within the agreed programme timescale.

A tenant satisfaction survey was carried out and the feedback from tenant/member(s) is very positive with the majority very satisfied with their new windows.



“definitely better, is warmer and quieter. Contractor was great”

“right good job, and is warmer now”

“Excellent contractor. Windows brilliant - cuts down outside noise”

## Tenancy Services Performance Report April'16 - Dec'16

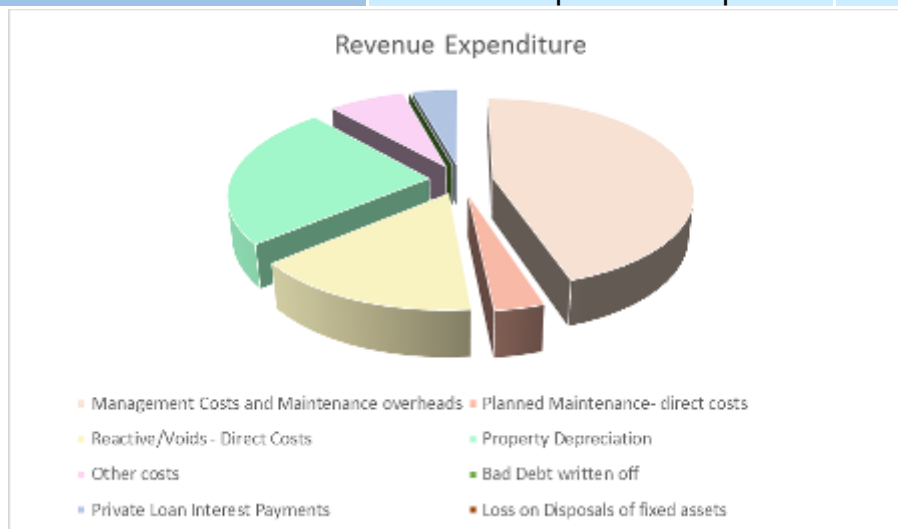
Turnover and Allocations			
At the end of December 2016 there were 137 applicants on the housing list and 117 on the transfer list.			
The average void time to re-let properties for the period up until financial year up was 18 days which is a reduction from 27 days in 2015/16 and below our target of 21 days. We have been working to improve this area of operation.		2015/16	16/17 at Dec 16
	Re-lets	77	53
	Direct applications	53%	51%
	Transfers	14%	9%
	SLC referrals	33%	40%
Rent Collection and Arrears			
Arrears	2015/16	16/17 to date	During the financial year up until 18.12.16 we collected 98.6% of the rent due, which was the same amount as we collected in 2015/16. If you need any help or advice regarding your account or benefits please contact your Housing Officer. This is particularly important if you have been invited to claim Universal Credit.
Current Tenants Target	4.0%	4.0%	
Current Tenants Actual	4.4%	5.5%	
Former Tenants Target	3.0%	3.0%	
Former Tenants Actual	3.5%	5.9%	
Estate Management			
Housing Management and Concierge staff work closely together and with other agencies to resolve neighbour and estate difficulties as quickly as possible.  Concierge staff also manage the housing alarm service and respond to calls through the system and all officers are first aid trained. Since April, 18 of the calls required emergency action.		2015/16	16/17 at Dec 16
	Abandoned tenancies	12	5
	Anti social behaviour	3	4
	Estate management	332	249
	Concierge incident report	126	22
	Housing alarm calls	192	143

## Property Services Performance Report April'16 - Dec'16

Item	April to December 2016
<b>Reactive Repairs</b>	
Instructed	1766
Emergency	316
Urgent	777
Routine	633
<b>Total within Target</b>	
Emergency	94%
Urgent	92%
Routine	94%

## WWHC Revenue Income and Expenditure for period April'16 - Dec'16

Revenue Income			Revenue Expenditure		
	Budget	Actual		Budget	Actual
Net Rents Receivable	2,208,742	2,239,371	Management Costs & Maint Overheads	1,252,233	1,182,249
Other Income	223,450	223,669	Planned Maintenance - Direct Costs	94,748	93,576
Bank Interest Received	5,000	5,210	Reactive/Voids - Direct Costs	433,098	414,929
Grants Released	612,576	612,576	Property Depreciation	681,307	681,307
Grants Received	1,917	1,917	Other Costs	203,295	185,877
			Bad debt written off	0	0
			Private Finance Loan - Interest Payments	120,070	120,070
			Loss on Disposals of Fixed Assets	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,051,685</b>	<b>3,082,743</b>		<b>2,784,751</b>	<b>2,678,008</b>
<b>Outturn Summary</b>			Budgeted Surplus for the period		266,934
			Actual Surplus for the period		404,735
			Variance/Surplus for the period		137,801



## The Scottish Housing Regulator ( SHR)

Each year the SHR assesses all Registered Social landlords in Scotland on their performance and grades them accordingly High Engagement Medium Engagement Low Engagement **High Engagement means SHR has some serious concerns about how the landlord is behaving and/or performing.**

**Medium Engagement means SHR has some concerns about how the landlord is behaving and/or performing**

**Low Engagement means SHR is comfortable with the landlords behaviour/performance and has confidence in the landlord**

Once again, for 2017/18, WWHC has been assessed as Low Engagement, which demonstrates The Scottish Housing Regulator's confidence in WWHC's behaviour and performance



# New Beauty Salon Opened in Arran Tower



Beautiful nail designs  
manicures, acrylics, nail art, Shellac



Hairdresser  
coming soon!



Book online, Facebook or call us  
No appointment necessary

The  
*Beauty*  
Studio

Beautiful  
*Colourful*  
You!

Ground Floor Arran Tower  
Cambuslang  
[www.thebeautystudios.co.uk](http://www.thebeautystudios.co.uk)



High Performance Megasun Sunbed  
First session FREE with block bookings



Full range of wax treatments  
Starting from only £4.00



Make up artist  
Get that full glam look!

*The Beauty Studio*

Ground Floor Arran Tower, Whitlawburn, Cambuslang, G72 8LW  
0141 643 9955 [www.thebeautystudios.co.uk](http://www.thebeautystudios.co.uk)



## Heat and Hot Water System Payments

We are very pleased to advise that the payment system in place for your heat and hot water is moving from Payzone to **Paypoint**. This will offer a better and more accessible payment service for tenants. You will soon be issued with a new payment card which will be posted out to you. In the meantime, you can use your existing card at any Paypoint terminal.

**P**ayPoint is available at over 29,000 places across the UK. Most stores are open early 'til late, 7 days a week. The nearest Paypoint is located in the Nisa store, Whitlawburn. To find other Paypoint outlets, please go to <https://paypoint.com/en-gb>

The various other ways to pay for your heat and hot water are still in place as follows:

- Direct debit or standing order to pay a fixed amount each month. You can do this by logging onto <https://payment.vitalenergi.co.uk> or by calling 0845 519 5099.
- Telephone 0845 519 5099 (Monday to Friday 8.00 am to 6.00 pm) quoting your unique payment card reference
- Online. You can logon to: <https://payment.vitalenergi.co.uk> to make single and subscription payments by credit or debit card or to set up direct debit.

For further assistance with your **meter or payments** you can contact the WWHC Office or contact vPro Customer Services direct on 0845 519 5099 (Monday to Friday 8.00 am-6.00 pm). Or by email at [billing@vitalenergi.co.uk](mailto:billing@vitalenergi.co.uk)



# Universal Credit Helpful Tips!

## Tell them your landlord is WWHC!

It is important you tell the DWP that you rent a property from the Co-operative as incorrect information at the start of your claim could delay your payments or result in you missing out on help to pay your rent.

## Talk to us!

Tell us if you have been invited to claim UC, we have staff who can help you. When you claim UC your rent payments (Housing Element) automatically get paid directly to you, we can help you decide whether or not this is appropriate and can give you advice about how to pay your rent so your account does not fall into arrears.

## If your situation or income changes, contact DWP as soon as possible

You are responsible for updating the DWP with any changes and this includes any changes to your rent charge

## Online claims

You can access free online services at the Whitlawburn Resource Centre and there are staff there to help support you if you need help.

## If you are struggling financially, ask us for help!

You will need to wait 6 weeks between making your claim and receiving your first monthly payment. Your future payments will then be made on the same date each month. We can help you apply for an interim payment if you are unable to manage until your first monthly payment is paid.

## Food Co-operative



5p



30p

The Food Co-operative is currently set up and run from Benmore Tower on a Thursday 10am-2pm and a Friday 5pm-7pm. It supplies fresh and affordable fruit, vegetables and groceries to everyone. They also receive a delivery from Tesco on a Friday which includes fresh bread.



15p



20p

# Fire Safety Information

Strathclyde Fire and Rescue advise that people who live in shared or rented accommodation are more likely to have a fire and therefore, we would like to draw tenants' attention to some very important information.

## **What do we do as a landlord to make your home safer?**

- We provide fire detection equipment within your home i.e. smoke alarms and carry out annual checks to ensure the equipment remains in safe working order.
- We keep your home fit to live in. Repairs are carried out when notified as deemed appropriate.
- We make sure all gas installations within your home (applicable to new build tenants only) are in good working order and inspected annually.
- We have staff trained to deal with emergency situations.



## **What can you do to make your home safer?**

- Ensure Fire Detection Systems are checked and always operational.
- Ensure you give The Co-operative access to carry out annual checks to your smoke detectors.
- Ensure you give The Co-operative access to carry out annual checks of your Gas Central Heating System.
- Report any faults to the main office immediately.
- Do not place covers over smoke detectors in your home.
- Do not remove smoke detectors that are fitted in your home.
- Regularly test your smoke detector (recommended at least once a week). If you need a demonstration on how to do this, contact our Concierge Manager Raymond Smith.
- Your smoke detectors are hard wired with a battery back up. You should not remove the battery as this will enable the smoke detector to operate in a power failure. If your battery is bleeping, contact the office or Concierge and we will be happy to replace.

## ***Be extra careful with electrics***

- Avoid overloading sockets - ONE PLUG PER SOCKET MAXIMUM
- Do not use heaters for drying clothes. Always keep clothes a safe distance away from the heater to avoid them catching fire.
- Do not attempt to carry out any electrical DIY or repairs yourself. Contact our Repairs staff who will be happy to provide advice and assistance.

## ***Stay safe with candles and cigarettes***

- Make sure you put cigarettes out properly. Use an ashtray. Do not throw them in the bin.
- If you have been drinking or taking medication that may make you drowsy, take extra care.
- Take care with candles and tea lights. Do not place them on or near materials that could catch fire and make sure you extinguish them properly.

## ***Make sure you have an escape route planned in the event of fire.***

- Plan an escape route and make sure everyone knows how to escape. It could save your life.
- Establish where the fire exits and alarms are.
- Count how many doors you might need to go through to escape. It can be hard to see in smoke and you might become confused about where you are.
- Keep all exits clear, even communal areas.

- Keep fire doors closed. They help to slow down the spread of fire and will give you extra time to get out.

- **Keep landings and escape routes safe and free of obstructions**

Do not store any items on your landing as this not only hampers your route for escape but it also can cause obstruction to the fire and rescue team who will attend to put out the fire. It also gives vandals or arsonists an easy way to start a landing fire.

Strathclyde Fire & Rescue regularly advise us where items are stored on the landing and we then action them as appropriate. This can include door mats, curtains etc.



## Spring is Blooming in the MSF Foyers

The planters in the Multi Storey foyers have recently been repainted by Concierge and restocked with a variety of hardy fresh shrubs.

We hope this will help brighten and make the foyers more welcoming for residents and visitors.



## CRC Hub– Digital drop in



Don't forget the Centre runs a digital drop-in for local people looking to get back into work and other employment help. The drop-in is open on:

**Monday and Wednesday's 10am – 4pm**

**Friday's 10am – 2pm.**



The **emergencySMS** service has been developed by RNID, BT, Cable & Wireless, the Department of Communities and Local Government, OFCOM, the UK emergency services and all mobile network operators.

For more information, visit:  
[www.emergencysms.org.uk](http://www.emergencysms.org.uk)  
[www.rnid.org.uk/esms](http://www.rnid.org.uk/esms)



RNID • ))

Contact **999**  
by **SMS text**



## Disposing of Rubbish



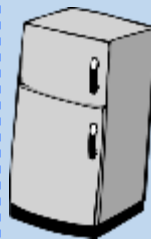
Tenants are reminded that small bags of rubbish should be placed down the chute and not put into the concrete bins on the estate. Larger bags of rubbish, pizza boxes, laminate flooring should all be placed either directly in the bins if you stay in the low rise or left in the cage area for Concierge to lift into the bins in multi storey flats. Larger bags of rubbish can also be emptied down the chute please do not force bags into the hoppers as this causes blockages which in turn can build a terrible smell in the close. Thank you for your co-operation.

## Dog Fouling

It is an offence to not clean up immediately after your dog in any open public space. If your dog fouls in the street and you don't clean it up you could be fined up to £500. If you are issued with a fixed penalty notice, the fine is £40, rising to £60 if not paid within 28 days. Both the main office and the Concierge station have dog poop bags and these are free of charge.



## Bulk Uplift



When you have large items to be uplifted please contact the Council on 0303 123 1020 or via their website on <http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/> and request an uplift. You get 1 free uplift per year, any additional uplift is £30. Please note mirrors and glass can

not be uplifted by the Council and must be disposed of at the local waste and recycling centre.

