



West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative Ltd

Spring Newsletter
2015



Biomass Heating and Hot Water System: Tenant Meetings Confirmed!

By now all tenants will have received an invitation to a tenants meeting to discuss the new biomass heating and hot water system. There will be 4 meetings in total and you have been invited to the one for your property type. Meetings will be held in Whitlawburn Resource Centre and will commence at 7pm. A separate meeting, with an interpreter present, has also be arranged for our polish speaking tenants.

After the recent revisit programme, we carried out a tenant survey to gauge tenant(s) satisfaction with the system because we were aware there have been issues. This second survey indicated that before the revisit programme 61% of tenants were unhappy with the system however, after the revisit programme 48% of those surveyed thought the system was working better than previously. This still leaves a considerable number of tenants who are not satisfied with the installation and operation of the system.



These levels of tenant satisfaction are not acceptable to the Co-operative and we have expressed our disappointment with the installation and operation of the system to date. As a result of this, there have been detailed investigations and discussions with regards to the design of the system and the costs to tenants. These discussions have now progressed significantly and we are in a position to update tenants with our plans to resolve the issues.

We have arranged these meetings so that you can hear our future proposals and have a chance to ask questions and raise any issues about the project in general. NPower, our Principal Contractor, will be in attendance at the meeting as will the WWHC Energy Team, who will be available at the end of the meeting to discuss with you any individual problems or issues you may have.

If you are unable to make your allocated meeting date please contact the Energy team who will see if you can attend an alternative meeting date. Meanwhile, if you have any enquiries or concerns relating to the heating and hot water system please contact any member of the Energy Team at the WWHC office and they will do their utmost to help you.

What's in this edition:		Page 7	What's on in CRC
Page 2	White Meters/ Hello to Kirstie	Page 8/9	Timetable for CRC
Page 3	Hello to Fiona & Grant	Page 10	Blantyre Credit Union
Page 4/5	Performance Reports	Page 11	Callpay/ Dog Fouling
Page 6	Universal Credit/ Free lightbulbs	Page 12	Ways to pay your rent

Attention all tenants previously using white meter heating

You could save money on your electricity costs by getting your electricity meter changed from a dual rate meter to a single rate. In order to get your meter changed you need to phone your supplier, explain that you no longer have white meter heating and that you want your meter changed to a single tariff meter. If you would like help to make this call, please call into the office and a member of the Energy team will call for you.

If you are currently using a prepaid key meter you will still be able to pay for your electricity in this way with the new meter.



Hello from Kirstie

Hello, my name is Kirstie McLean, I came to West Whitlawburn Housing Co-Operative in November 2014 as a volunteer and was delighted to be given the opportunity to stay on. When I started here I was based in the Housing Management Team as a housing assistant. One of my main tasks was carrying out new tenant visits. More recently I have moved to the Energy Team where I have been visiting tenants who have queries about their heating, also assisting with the revisits programme and conducting surveys to investigate how tenants feel about the new heating system.

Before starting at West Whitlawburn I worked for Maryhill Housing Association for a year and a half as a housing assistant where I mainly dealt with lettings. I was keen to volunteer at West Whitlawburn to gain a wider experience of working in housing.

I previously studied architecture which is how I became interested in housing and the built environment. I then went on to complete a college course in Community Development and Housing Law Advice. Stephanie McPeake and Paul Farrell taught the housing classes on this course and through meeting them I was given the opportunity to volunteer with the Co-op.

I am very much enjoying my time at the co-op and have found the staff and tenants very friendly and welcoming. I look forward to continuing to work on the Energy Project and all the challenges it will bring.



Hello from Fiona

Hi, my name is Fiona Heeps and I started at West Whitlawburn on the 16th February 2015 as a Housing Assistant. In the short time I have been here my housing knowledge has increased significantly and I have been made very welcome by all the members of staff and tenants.

This is my second post as a Housing Assistant as I was with Cairn Housing Association in Coatbridge on a temporary contract for 16 months. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there interacting with tenants, contractors and colleagues and this influenced my decision to stay within the voluntary housing sector.

Prior to this I worked for the Clydesdale Bank for nearly 21 years in a variety of roles, starting off within the branches, then in a number of back office departments before taking voluntary redundancy.

I am married with two sons aged 9 & 7. I love baking cupcakes, cakes and biscuits and have recently completed an SVQ in Sugar paste and Royal Icing by attending evening classes at the City of Glasgow College.

I look forward to meeting you over the coming weeks.



Hello from Grant

My name is Grant Clayton, I have recently been appointed as Assistant Director of Property Services at West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative. I was pleased to be asked to introduce myself to the tenant members and this short article will give a bit of background of my career to date and why I am delighted to be joining the staff team at WWHC.

I have worked in housing since 2002 and have a keen interest in building and construction. For the majority of my career I have worked within property services at both Cube Housing Association and Loretto Housing Association. In my previous post at Loretto, I managed a team of 4 and was responsible for the repairs and maintenance service for over 1200 properties. During this time, I also studied at Glasgow Caledonian University, where I was awarded a first class honours degree in construction management.



Between 2008 and 2014, I was responsible for the maintenance and refurbishment of 29 multi-storey blocks in Glasgow with a particular focus on building services including lifts and water services. In this specialist post, I was also directly involved in the installation of a large scale district heating project to 1700 homes over 2 years in Maryhill. This post has given me the valuable skills, knowledge and experience which will be required to successfully deliver the Housing Co-operative's objectives including WWHC's state of the art bio-mass heating system. I am very excited to be joining the team at WWHC and firmly believe in the organisation's strategic aims and innovative approach to community empowerment. I will relish the opportunity and challenge of maintaining and enhancing the good services which are provided within your community. You'll see me around the estate and I look forward to meeting all of the tenant members.

Performance Reports

Corporate Services - Finance

Revenue Income & Expenditure for the period April 2014 to December 2014

Revenue Income			Revenue Expenditure		
	Budget	Actual		Budget	Actual
Net Rents Receivable	2,165,703	2,191,439	Management Costs & Maintenance Overheads	1,115,343	1,067,279
Other Income	85,985	86,585	Planned Maintenance - Direct Costs	95,177	51,568
Bank Interest Received	225	1385	Reactive/Voids - Direct Costs	420,158	408,945
			Property Depreciation	118,950	118,950
			Other Costs	136,204	130,839
			Bad debt written off	0	0
			Private Finance Loan Capital Repayments	119,522	119,522
Totals	2,251,913	2,279,409		2,005,354	1,897,103
Outturn Summary			Budgeted Surplus for the period	246,559	
			Actual Surplus for the period	382,306	
			Variance/Surplus for the period	135,747	



Property Services

Item	January to March 2015	Comments
Reactive Repairs		
Instructed	688(97 voids)	
Emergency	73	
Urgent	183	
Routine	335	
Total within Target		
Emergency	69 (94.20%)	4 emergency repair jobs outwith target timescales. 1 job was delayed due to parts ordering for a lift component. 1 job required a new pump for a water tank. The 2 other jobs were just outwith the target time at approximately 1 hour 30 mins over.
Urgent	175(95.43%)	
Routine	309 (91.59)%	
Right to Repair	21 RTR reported	All completed within target timescales



Tenancy Services



Turnover and Allocations



At the end of February 2015, there were 192 applicants on the housing list and 112 on the transfer list.

Since April 2014, 82 properties have been re-let. The average void time was 25 days which is above our target of 21 days. We will be looking into average out the void time further.		2013/14	Apr 14 to Feb 15
	Re-lets	95	82
	Direct applications	48%	48%
	Transfers	19%	23%
	SLC referrals	29%	29%

£££ Rent Collection and Arrears £££

Arrears	2013/2014	2014/2015	During this financial year we have collected 95.4% of the rent due at the 15.02.2015, compared with 98.2% during the financial year of 2013/14. If you need any help or advice please contact your Housing Officer.
Current Tenants		February	
Target	4.6%	4.0%	
Actual	4.0%	4.49%	
Former Tenants			
Target	0.9%	1.0%	
Actual	1.9%	3.20%	



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 Officer's are first aiders. Since April 2014, 26 of the calls required emergency action.		2013/14	April 14 to Feb 15
	Abandoned tenancies	14	21
	Serious Anti social behaviour	10	0
	Concierge incident report	523	343
	Housing alarm calls	394	262



Universal Credit Update

Universal Credit, the new benefit to replace most existing welfare benefits, is scheduled to be introduced in South Lanarkshire in October 2015.

You will be notified by the DWP directly if and when any changes are likely to affect the way your benefit is paid. Initially this will affect only single claimants.

The Co-operative will continue to keep you up to date with information as we get it.

An important point to remember, if your household is moving onto the new system of Universal Credit, is that your rent charge will need to be paid by you, the claimant, to the Co-operative direct from your individual monthly allocation of Universal Credit.

We will be contacting tenants who will be affected by the change nearer the time to discuss any concerns you have and decide suitable payment methods to help make the move over to the new benefit as smooth as possible.

In the meantime if you have any questions regarding the new benefit please contact any member of the Housing Management Team. More details on Universal Credit will follow in the coming months.

Direct
payments

Benefit
entitlement

Bank
Accounts

Are you ready for
Universal Credit?

Paying
rent

Budgeting

Internet
access

Free lightbulbs available!

NPower, our principle contractor for the Biomass Heating system, have kindly donated low energy lightbulbs for all our tenants. The number of bulbs available to each household is restricted to 2 bulbs per household and they are available at the office from a member of the Energy Team. Please call into the office to collect them.

What's happening in the Resource Centre

March saw our Energy Advice project come to an end. Over the past two years John McInall has provided local tenants with a range of services from switching energy providers to measuring energy usage in houses. John has become a familiar face around the estate and we are sad to see him leave.

New Heating

The centre has recently seen the installation of the Biomass system into the building. This was funded by Community Spaces.

Recycle Shop

Don't forget our Recycle shop is open 9am – 12pm Tuesday to Friday. Why not pop in and have a look. All items for sale are £1 or £2. If you have any household goods you wish to donate (bedding, towels etc) just contact the Resource Centre!

Digital Drop-in

The Centre runs a free Digital Drop-in on the following days:

Monday from 11am – 3pm

Wednesday from 12pm – 4pm

The drop-in provides help for people looking at gaining a range of IT skills and improved access to Government information and employment and training opportunities. We also have Routes to Work



Citizens Advice Bureau

We run a Citizens Advice Outreach on a Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Appointments are 10am, 11am, 1pm & 2pm. If you wish to book a visit to see the advisor, contact the Centre. Blantyre & South Lanarkshire Credit Union are in the Centre 12pm – 1pm on Mondays (appointment only), 12pm – 1.30 pm on Wednesdays and 12pm – 1.00pm on Fridays.

Food Donations

Michelle Friel who does fitness classes at the Centre recently handed in food donations which she has collected at various classes over the past few months. The Centre will ensure the donation is put to good use – many thanks Michelle!!



ARE YOU READY?

BSL CREDIT UNION ARE HERE TO HELP YOU TO GET READY...

Worried about the impact of welfare reform?

...get ready for Universal Credit! We can help you organise your finances to ensure you stay on top! The benefit changes may cause hardship and crisis for people; we can ensure your rent is paid, and every member of a household gets their own benefit payment.

...be prepared for an emergency with one of our Freedom 2 loans! Not based on savings and with easy affordable repayments to suit you. Why pay over the odds in interest

Freedom 2 Loan →
Get up to £250 Now



Christmas 2015 will be here before you know it.

...get ready for Christmas! With one of our Christmas accounts, where your savings will be locked in until November, helping you to have a debt Free Christmas this year!

To discuss any of the above, drop into the Whitlawburn Resource Centre and ask for Alison.

Or stop by the Fruit Barra (Food Co-operative) in Benmore Tower on a Thursday.

Alternatively you can call us on 01698 711112.

Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority & regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. Biantyre & South Lanarkshire Credit Union is the trading name for Biantyre Credit Union Ltd. FCA Firm Ref 213869

<http://www.biantyrecreditunion.org.uk/>



Find us online

New Rent Payment Method-Callpay

You can now make rent and lock up payments to us using your debit or credit card. Payments can be made in person or over the telephone. If calling at the office your payment will be taken and a receipt issued immediately. If making a payment over the telephone we can e mail you a receipt immediately or send a printed receipt in the post. Hopefully this additional payment method will make it easier and more convenient for you to make payments. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact any member of the Housing Management Team.



Dog Fouling - Bag It and Bin It!

Always carry something to clean up after your dog - a plastic bag or a 'poop scoop' device will do.
Dispose of poo bags in a dog poop bin or any public litter bin.

If you are caught on CCTV your details can be passed to South Lanarkshire Council Environmental Services where they can issue a £40 fixed penalty - This will rise to £60 if not paid within 28 days
Maximum fine is £500



YOU DECIDE Scoop the Poop or pay?

If you see anyone not picking up after their dog please contact South Lanarkshire Council Environmental Services on [08457 406080](tel:08457 406080)

Free Poop Scoop Bags available from the Main Office or Concierge





Different ways to pay your rent



Pay on a date that suits you



Through the Allpay
Payment App



Over the phone,
Online or by text
0844 557 8321 | allpayments.net
Allpayments.net/text



With cash
over the



Pay by  Debit
card

We now accept these payments

Choose your way to pay!