



# Newsletter



Autumn 2020

## GLASGOW WEST HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

### Annual General Meeting (AGM) & Special General Meeting (SGM)

Thank you to everyone who attended our 42nd AGM and SGM event which was the first ever to be held by way of video conferencing, allowing Glasgow West to comply with Covid-19 government guidelines. Thank you also to those who submitted apologies, sent in SGM postal votes and to those who submitted questions.

The purpose of the SGM was to propose a new set of Rules to the membership and for it to take place, 15 members were required to attend. In total, 18 members attended and 39 postal votes were received in advance with 94.8% voting for the resolution to be passed.

Following the SGM we held our AGM, again by way of video conferencing with the main focus being on the formal business: Adopting the Minute of the 41st AGM, Receiving the Chairperson's Report, electing the management committee, presenting the accounts and auditors report and appointing the auditor.

We can confirm that our management committee for 2020/21 are: Anila Ali; Anne Campbell; Issi Gracie; Joe Heaney (Chairperson); Nina MacNeil (Secretary); Joginder Makar (Treasurer); Susan Mosedale (Vice Chair); Billy Robertson and Yushin Toda.

### Committee Training Forum (CTF)

The CTF provides an opportunity for any tenants and members of Glasgow West, who are interested in joining the Management Committee, to take part in a learning programme.

The programme is designed to equip prospective members with the competencies and confidence to become a potential Committee Member. We are hosting the CTF digitally so why not join in from the comfort of your own home!

Anyone interested in joining should email Carol at [admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk](mailto:admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk)

### Public Holiday Closure Friday 25th and Monday 28th September

Service will resume  
from 9am on Tuesday  
29 September

Please refer to our  
website:  
[www.gwha.org.uk](http://www.gwha.org.uk) for  
latest service updates.



For emergency repairs out with office hours,  
please call City Building direct on 0800 595  
595.



Follow us on Twitter: @GlasgowWest4

Find us on Facebook: [facebook.com/GlasgowWestHA](https://facebook.com/GlasgowWestHA)

## REVIEW OF SERVICE CHARGE APPORTIONMENT: CONSULTATION RESPONSES BY 31/10/20

In the process of implementing the first phase of our rent restructuring programme (from 28/03/20) we amended the method for apportioning service costs to reflect independent property factoring advice; and with the effect that residents now pay the actual cost for maintaining their immediate common area (e.g. close and back-court/ garden) rather than an equal share of the total cost for maintaining common areas across all properties.

For some residents this change resulted in an increase in the amount paid for services; and, on reflection, we accepted that the revised administrative process should have been more fully explained in advance to enable residents to provide feedback and/or prepare for the change. We apologise for this unintended oversight.

To help explain the options, the two methods for your consideration are illustrated as Options A and B using hypothetical examples. Administratively, Option B is more straightforward for us to calculate and apply, and all tenants would pay the same amount irrespective of the common area; whereas Option A is more transparent in that the amount you pay would reflect the actual cost of the work carried out in your common areas.

### OPTION A: POST 2020 (CURRENT METHOD)

Total actual cost for Property A	= £510 p/a
Divided by 6 households in the Close	
Cost per household =	<b>= £85 p/a</b>
Total actual cost for Property B	= £840 p/a
Divided by 8 households in the Close	
Cost per household =	<b>= £105 p/a</b>

### OPTION B: PRE-2020 (OLD METHOD)

Total actual cost for all properties	= £150,000 p/a
Divided equally by 1500 households	
Cost per household =	<b>= £100 p/a</b>

It is our proposal that Option A will continue to apply in future, and we would appreciate your feedback on this proposal by email to [admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk](mailto:admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk) (subject heading: service charge consultation) by 31/10/20. Alternatively, if you would prefer to speak with a member of staff for further information, please leave a voicemail message on 0141-331 6650 and we will return your call as soon as possible.

Our Management Committee will consider all responses mid-November, and the outcome will be reported in the Winter newsletter. This consultation applies only to tenants, as irrespective of the outcome of the consultation, Option A will apply for factored (owner-occupied) properties to comply with the independent factoring advice we received.

**Rent payments are due in advance and should be made on or before the 28th of each month. Direct Debit is the most efficient way to pay your rent. Please contact the team if you wish to review your payment method or if you have any concerns paying your rent, or have recently applied for Universal Credit.**

**Tel: 0141 331 6650**

**Email: [admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk](mailto:admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk)**

# Christmas is Coming!

## Cash for kids

Last year a total of £1900 was distributed, assisting 45 families to provide a Christmas treat for their children.

We are disappointed to inform you that communication from Cash for Kids is that the pandemic has seriously impacted their fundraising activity and it is unlikely that the scheme will operate this year. If there is any change, we will of course be in contact with all eligible households.

Keep an eye on our website and social media for any updates!



## Colouring Competition

Our festive colouring competition is returning this year! We have some very talented artists in our community and we look forward to seeing your brilliant work! Following the success of last year's earlier launch date, we will be making entry forms available from Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

Entry forms will be available on our website from this date for you to print off, or if you'd like a copy posted please get in touch.



Pictured: Susie & Caoimhe, our 2019 winners!

## Festive Sweet-Treats!

Last year our staff delivered festive treats to 364 of our tenants aged 65 and over. We do not want anyone to miss out, so if you or a neighbour didn't receive a gift last year and think that you are eligible to receive a festive treat this year, please contact us on 0141 331 6650.

We will do our best to keep up with this much loved tradition and Covid-19 restrictions permitting, will deliver the festive treats before the Christmas office closure.



# Glasgow West - Here to Help You!



Our free and confidential welfare rights service is still available.

For help and advice on a range of enquiries including:

- ✓ Housing Benefit/ Universal Credit to help pay your rent;
- ✓ Council Tax reduction and discounts;
- ✓ Allowances for illness, disability of caring for someone

Please contact us by telephone 0141 331 6650 or by emailing [admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk](mailto:admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk) and we will respond as soon as possible.

## Over 75 TV Licence -

### Are you eligible for a free licence?

From 1st August 2020, the BBC introduced a new scheme that offers some over 75 households a free TV Licence. To be eligible you must be:

- 75 or older and
- you or your partner living at the same address must receive Pension Credit.



If you had a free TV licence up to 31<sup>st</sup> July, the BBC will write to you to explain what you need to do to set up your next licence. If you think you could be entitled to Pension Credit please contact our team for a benefit check-up.

Age Scotland have an online calculator should you wish to look here too:  
[www.benefitscheck.ageuk.org.uk/home/start](http://www.benefitscheck.ageuk.org.uk/home/start)



## Universal Credit (UC) Update

If you move onto Universal Credit from Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Jobseekers Allowance or Income Support after 22/07/2020, you will now receive a 2 week run on of the current benefit you receive. This doesn't affect your first payment of Universal Credit and is not treated as income for your Universal Credit claim. This is to offer some additional support, as you will wait 5 weeks for your first UC payment.

### RENT / HOUSING COSTS

Housing Costs mean RENT, therefore money received for housing costs should be paid to the association for your rent.

Should you claim housing costs through UC, the DWP will contact us to confirm the current charges. It is therefore vital you have up to date information on your rent and service charges. If you are unsure about these please contact us for details. Once we have verified the costs with the DWP we will then issue you with a letter to confirm this.





## Warm Home Discount Scheme



You could get £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2020/21 under this scheme. It opens on 12 October 2020. The money is not paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between September and March.

You may be able to get the discount on your gas bill instead if your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity. Contact your supplier to find out more. The discount will not affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment.

You will qualify for the Warm Homes Discount Scheme if:

- you get the Guaranteed Credit element of Pension Credit, or,
- you're on a low income and meet your energy supplier's criteria for the scheme

You'll receive a letter between October and December 2020 telling you how to get the discount if you qualify. Your electricity supplier will apply the discount to your bill by 31 March 2021. If you don't receive a letter or if you need assistance, please let us know and we will help with the online application. You will need your account number for your electricity account, and if possible an email address.

## Best Start Grants

Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods are available :

- if your child is the right age for a payment
- as long as you're the parent of a child, or the main person looking after the child
- In work or not, as long as you're on certain benefits or payments

Best Start Grant consists of 3 cash payments made in stages. Each payment is paid once per child. The 3 Best Start Grant payments are:

1. Pregnancy & Baby Payment (from 24 weeks pregnant until baby is 6 months)
2. Early Learning Payment (child is aged between 2 - 3 years 6 months)
3. School Age Payment (children born between 01/03/15—29/02/16)

**Applications are made online: [www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods/](http://www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods/) or, if you would prefer to call there is a helpline 0800 182 2222, open Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm.**



**Social Security Scotland**  
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Contact our welfare rights team for queries or help in completing the application.

## SUBLETTING YOUR HOME



Subletting is when the property is let in part, or in its entirety, by the tenant to a person who is not the principle tenant. Tenants are permitted to do so only with the express written consent of the landlord. We have prepared a selection of Frequently Asked Questions and answers below. To avoid breaching your tenancy you must always contact us in advance to clarify queries and/or to discuss plans to sublet or take in a lodger.

### **Am I entitled to legally sublet my home or take in a lodger?**

Applications to sublet are permissible if you have been resident for a minimum of 12 months. You must apply in writing and you must have our written consent before subletting. We recommend completing our Application to Sub-let or take in a lodger Form. This should include details of the proposed transaction, and any payment which has been or is to be received by the tenant in reference to the lodging. We will acknowledge all applications in 3 working days and will respond within 28 days in line with legislation. For the avoidance of doubt, permission is refused unless or until you have our written consent.

### **Will Glasgow West refuse consent?**

Yes - if we have reasonable grounds for doing so. A list of exceptions and reasons for refusal are included in policy available on our website. It is important that you do not ignore our refusal and proceed with your proposed sublet as this is a breach of tenancy which may result in legal action and you losing your home.

### **Can I let part or all of my property out to holiday makers?**

No. There has been an increase of bed & breakfasts and other types of holiday accommodation in our local area however we will not give permission to our tenants for this. We will consider any advertising or profiteering from use of our property for such purposes as a serious tenancy breach and may seek legal advice which may result in the loss of your home.

### **Does it matter how long I sublet?**

Under our Policy, the maximum term for sub-letting or taking in a lodger is 9 months. We may consider extending this in exceptional circumstances.

### **What should I do if I suspect my neighbour is subletting without permission?**

Our tenants are often the first people to notice if a tenant is absent from the property, or if there has been a change in their household. If you suspect that someone is sub-letting without permission we will investigate the matter fully and confidentially.

With such high demand for tenancies we want our properties to be occupied by tenants who need a home, and not being let for profit by those tenants who don't. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact us on 0141 331 6650.

## Alterations/Common Works



The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in many Glasgow West services being restricted or limited, in line with Government lockdown restrictions. Consequently we have been advised that some residents are carrying out alterations and repairs to the common areas such as grass cutting and backcourt maintenance for example. Whilst we appreciate this is being undertaken with the best of intentions, we must ask that you contact us in advance for advice to ensure compliance with Health and Safety, and to avoid upsetting your neighbours, or damaging the property.

Please see P9 for an update on the planned reintroduction of backcourt maintenance services.

**For more information on repairs and maintenance, please refer to our website [www.gwha.org.uk](http://www.gwha.org.uk), telephone us on 0141 331 6650 or email [admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk](mailto:admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk) and a member of our team will call you back**

## Fire Safety Advice

### Home Working



FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service are urging people who are working from home to use any electrical equipment, such as laptops or computers, on hard surfaces and please remember to unplug devices overnight.

Also, you should test your smoke alarms at least monthly to ensure they are fully operational. If you have any problems with them, get in touch with us on 0141 331 6650.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has created a range of useful home fire safety checklists which you can find here:

[www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/covid-19](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/covid-19)

We understand that many of our residents are working from home during the pandemic and would like to confirm that this does not breach your tenancy agreement. Please be aware that some home contents insurance policies will not cover working from home and you should check this with your policy provider.

## Annual Gas Servicing

The Scottish Housing Minister, Kevin Stewart, has written an open letter to tenants (this can be found on our website) encouraging you to contact us to arrange your annual gas service. If you are vulnerable or self-isolating, you should contact us to discuss and reschedule the visit.

To ensure your safety and that of the engineer, please adhere to the social distancing rules during the visit.

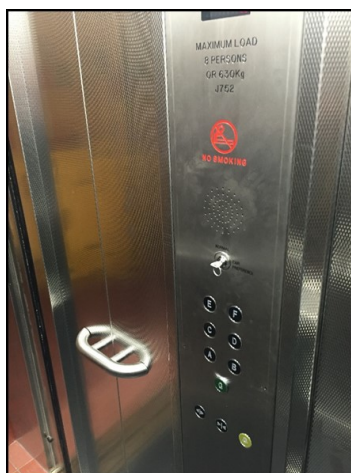
If you have a "pay as you go" meter, ensure this is topped up and easily accessible.

Annual Gas Servicing is a statutory safety requirement, and we appreciate your support in ensuring all safety checks are carried out on time.

## Property Investment

### Lift Modernisation

Consult Lift Services have recently been appointed to progress planned investment works to four lifts in the coming months, subject to consultation with owners and further communication with all residents.



### Lift Servicing & Maintenance

City Building (Contracts) have recently been appointed for Lift Maintenance & Servicing for an initial 3 year term. City Building (Contracts) will be responsible for planned visits and reactive response call outs to the 18 passenger lifts serving your homes.



### CCTV

We are in the final stages of assessing the proposals received for CCTV



Modernisation and Servicing for high-rise and deck access properties.

Subject to consultation with owners and further communication with all residents, we hope to progress with works to replace cameras and upgrade the operating systems and infrastructure over the coming months.

### Project Management Consultants

Welcome to Faithful & Gould Consultants who will be working with us over the coming years to deliver some key investment projects such as our Window replacements, Energy Efficiency Works, Kitchen & Bathroom Replacements, and Tenement Stonework fabric repairs. Following an initial planning period we will be in touch with you to set out our detailed plan and outline consultation opportunities.



### Electrical & Fire Safety Works

To ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, we will require access to a number of properties for the purposes of carrying out electrical safety checks, minor remedial works and installation of additional Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarms.

To help us shape this programme, we would like to invite your feedback on any concerns you may have in relation to these works to assist the Projects Team in developing useful tenant communication packs. Please contact us by emailing [admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk](mailto:admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk) or give us a call on 0141 331 6650 and leave a message and someone will call you back.



## Environmental Services

### Caledonian Maintenance Services

Caledonian Maintenance Services, the new close cleaning contractor, commenced on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August; and will focus throughout September on a "recovery clean" at all contract addresses to ensure the areas are returned to the expected standards, and to make up for the gap in services during the Covid-19 lockdown.

CMS operatives will be working under strict Coronavirus guidelines and you are reminded to please maintain acceptable social distancing whilst the teams are working within your closes.

Service charges relating to routine and deep cleaning will be reviewed as per normal procedure later in the year, including any variation following this new contract award. For further information, please contact Karen or Rebecca in our Estates Team on 0141 331 6650 and leave a voicemail; or email [estates@glasgowwestha.co.uk](mailto:estates@glasgowwestha.co.uk)



### Tree Maintenance

Caledonian Tree Services have completed phase 2 of our tree and shrub maintenance plan, with works to 76 trees, as confirmed necessary by the specialist tree health surveyor. Works including removal and crown lifting were phased to be undertaken after the nesting season, with Ecology surveys completed in advance. We recognise the importance of natural environment and the difference greenery makes to urban and backcourt areas. Over the coming year we will be developing a tree planting programme and look forward to your involving you in these plans.



### Back court and Landscape Maintenance



We are now working with our estates contractor, idverde to establish a plan for the soft landscaping recovery (phase 2) which includes grass and hedge cutting, power washing of hard surfaces and weed removal. Please look out for updates on this through our website and social media.

idverde are currently focussing on waste management, removing bulk items and bin store sanitising.

We appreciate your patience as we work to reinstate these important estates services.

## Rent Reward Scheme

This year's annual bonus payment of £52 will be paid week commencing 14/12/2020 to our qualifying members - just in time for Christmas!

Payment will be made by bank transfer instead of cheque, and we will write to all eligible members in November to confirm the award and ask for your preferred account details.

The last draw of the year will take place on December 16th.

Congratulations to our September winner: Margaret Sommerville & Runner Up: Norma Charleson

**If you would like further information on how to join the Rent Reward Scheme please contact Dominic by leaving a message on 0141 331 6650 or email: [dmcgonigle@glasgowwestha.co.uk](mailto:dmcgonigle@glasgowwestha.co.uk)**

### Benefits of Joining!

- **Free entry to quarterly prize draw**
- **£10 bonus payment when you join**
- **£52 annual bonus payment and a new pro rata payment for new members!**
- **Contribution towards Home Contents Insurance**

## Wellbeing Fund



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
[gov.scot](http://gov.scot)

We were delighted to be allocated £19,575 through Phase 2 of the Scottish Government's Wellbeing Fund. This funding helped support our community in a number of ways.

- ✓ We provided direct support to the Sikh Foodbank and the Glasgow North West Foodbank by making cash donations of £3500 each to allow them to continue their vital work. This resulted in 976 people benefitting from a 3 day food parcel
- ✓ We provided financial support to households for phone and/or utility bills/top-ups
- ✓ We provided practical support to a number of our new residents to assist them to physically move into their properties during the pandemic

### You Said, We Did

'You Said, We Did' highlights the impact your comments and complaints have on the services we provide. Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback

#### You Said...

**You were unhappy with the delay in response due to email being delivered to Junk Mail**

**You were unhappy with how changes to our concierge service were communicated during the initial lockdown.**

#### We Did...

We have reviewed our process and now check our junk mailbox on a daily basis.

We have since created a broader communication strategy with poster updates at concierge sites, in addition to our online updates.

## Have Your Say!

In July we carried out a remote consultation on our complaints process and Service Quality Guarantee. The aim was to find out possible areas for improvement in our service and in the information we provide. The following recommendations were made:

- Create a smaller info [leaflet](#)
- Publish Service Quality Guarantee more widely

Our next consultation will take place in November and we will be looking for your views on our Tenant [Handbook](#). In light of the ongoing restrictions we will be looking for feedback via phone interviews and paper/ online surveys. Participation is open to all - if you would like to get involved please email [admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk](mailto:admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk) or call 0141 331 6650 and leave a message.

### Anne Gould Award

The Anne Gould Award annually recognises staff that go out their way to deliver, and enhance, the customer experience. It is named after Anne Gould, who served Glasgow West as a valued management committee member for five years and she recognised the best in any situation, without compromising on the customer service experience. Her contribution to Glasgow West is commemorated through this annual staff recognition award.

If you think a member of staff has delivered an exemplary customer service or enhanced the your experience of being a Glasgow West tenant then you can nominate them for the award. To nominate, please contact our HR team at [hr@glasgowwestha.co.uk](mailto:hr@glasgowwestha.co.uk)



2020 Team Winners:  
Factoring Database  
Audit Team (Brian  
Gilmartin, Ciaran  
O'Grady and  
Caroline Mills,  
pictured with Elaine  
Travers)

or download a nomination form from our website. The closing date for entries is 20/12/20

### 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Homeowners Conference –

**Thursday, 8th October 2020**

This will be an online event due to current Covid-19 restrictions.

Further information will be provided shortly and we hope you will be able to join us for this important event.



**Coming Soon... our Annual Landlord Charter Report will be distributed with our Winter Newsletter!**

**Important date for your diary... our Annual Tenant Conference will be held on Saturday 23 January 2021 where we will discuss our annual rent review (process now underway!)... more details to follow!**





## Staff News

Best wishes to Richie Buchanan and Colin McDevitt, Concierge for a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Also good luck to Stephen Dougherty, Services Officer, Jim Speirs, Concierge and Frank O'Neill, Concierge as they move on to pastures new. We thank you all for your service.

Congratulations to Daniel Wedge, Technical Director in his new post.

Welcome back to Laura Clapperton, Services Officer who has recently returned to Glasgow West.



## Pick of the Crop!

Some people have decided to take up new hobbies during this pandemic and this is certainly the case with our tenant Claudia. Having her own small fruit & vegetable garden was always something she had wanted to do and during lockdown she decided to go for it!

She has started with tomatoes and cucumbers, and with the help of some advice from her local garden centre, is starting to see the fruits of her labour! As you can see from the photos, the cucumbers turned out well and were quick to be taste tested. She is hoping that the tomatoes will follow suit.



**"Of course the cucumbers I ate from my garden (4 already!) are the tastiest cucumbers I've had in my life!"**

She's enjoyed the process of watching them growing and spending time with her plants in the "garden". This also inspired her to make some pots and saucers which made the garden even more vibrant! She modelled and painted them herself with air dry clay and watercolours.

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Office opening hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday - 9am to 4pm  
Tuesday - 11.30am to 4pm. Appointments are available at other times on request.

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