



Newsletter



December 2015

GLASGOW WEST HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

From all the Committee & Staff of Glasgow West Housing Association



16th Annual Tenants Conference

Sandyford Henderson Church, Kelvinhaugh Street.

Saturday 23rd January 2016 - 11am to 12.30pm

Invitations for this very important Event will be with you around mid-January 2016. As always we have lots to talk to you about, including the rent proposals for 2016/17 (see article on pages 10 and 11) and our plans and priorities for the future.

We look forward to welcoming the GW Bookworms again this year, and the winners of our much coveted Good Close/Garden Competition will be announced. We're sure you'll agree an Event not to be missed! Please take the opportunity to come along to our ATC to ensure your views are represented. Details of crèche facilities and transport will be included with the Invitation, which will be with you week beginning 11th January.

Office Closure Dates

Our offices (and the Hyndland concierge station) will be closed on the following dates:

**Wednesday 23/12/15 till
Tuesday 05/01/16 inclusive**

The Blythswood and St Vincent Terrace concierge stations will operate as normal during the above dates.

Please refer to the office answer phone or the GWAH calendar in the event of an emergency arising out with our normal office hours.

See article on page 4 regarding Emergency Repairs.



Investment Works Defects

If you have had investment works carried out over the last 12 months and a problem occurs over the festive period when the office is closed please contact the contractor directly.



Kitchen/bathroom/rewire/central heating:

0800 408 1445



Windows: 0141 643 3744



Anderston Stone Works:

07711064318 or Richard.Goldie@cbc.uk.com

If you would prefer to receive the newsletter in a different format or font, please contact the office and we will do our best to accommodate your requirements.

Online Account: Kypera Mobile

Due to circumstances out with our control there has been a delay in the live launch of our online account facility. We are working closely with our software partners to ensure a successful launch in the very near future.

Many thanks to all who have registered an interest in accessing your own online account, if you have not already done so please register your interest by emailing Iain Nicholl on it@glasgowwestha.co.uk



Keep Safe This Winter

During cold weather, you can avoid frost damage and burst pipes by following the steps below:

- Set the thermostat on your central heating to at least 10°C (50°F) & heat the property regularly to avoid pipes freezing
- Leave the doors in each room open as this allows warm air to circulate around your home



IF YOU HAVE A BURST PIPE:

- **Phone Emergency Telephone Numbers** (see enclosed calendar or call office answer phone)
- **Turn off mains water valve:** These are usually located near to your central heating system or underneath the kitchen sink.
- **If water is in contact with any of your electrical appliances:** If safe to do so remove the plug from wall socket. If in any doubt wait for a contractor to attend.



The security of your home and that of your neighbours is really important. Don't give thieves a chance:

- **Make** sure the front and back close doors are locked at all times
- **Make** sure tools or ladders that a burglar could use to get in are securely locked away.
- **Never** leave keys in a secret place that might be discovered.
- **Don't** leave notes on the door saying you are out.
- **Never** leave valuables lying around where they can be seen through a window.
- **Take** a separate note of the serial numbers on your electrical items. This helps Police Scotland to reunite stolen goods to their owners.



For further information, call 101 and they will be able to transfer you to your local police station.



Keep Well & Warm This Winter



Wear warm clothes - Wrap up warm, inside and out. Wear lots of thin layers - clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres help to maintain body heat. Wear shoes with a good grip to prevent slips and falls outside. If possible, stay inside during a cold period if you have heart or respiratory problems.

Keep your home Warm - If you have reduced mobility, are 65 or over, or have a health condition such as heart or lung disease, you should heat your home to at least 18C. It's a good idea to keep your bedroom at this temperature all night if you can.



Use a hot water bottle or electric blanket to keep warm while you're in bed.

Affordable Warmth Dividend

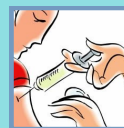
If you have received this payment previously or if you will be 80 or older by 31/03/2016 Glasgow City Council will write to you to let you know that the dividend is available again. We have also sent letters to all our tenants who we think are eligible to apply.

There is a form that you need to sign and return in order to receive the payment.

If you need any help with the form or if you don't receive any letters please contact Garry Saunders on 0141 331 6662



How To Fight Flu - Flu is a highly infectious illness that can spread rapidly. Find out if you're eligible for a free vaccination at www.nhs.uk or contact your GP.



Eat Well - Food is a vital source of energy, which helps keep your body warm. Try to make sure that you have hot meals & drinks regularly throughout the day.



Stay Active - If you can stay active, even moderate exercise can bring health benefits and keep you warm. If possible, try not to sit still for more than an hour or so.



Help Your Neighbours - Check on older neighbours or relatives to make sure they're safe and well.



Warm House Discount Scheme

For winter 2015 to 2016, you could get £140 off your electricity bill through this scheme.



The money isn't paid to you, it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, usually paid between September & March.

You qualify for the discount if on 12/07/15 all of the following apply:

- Your supplier was part of the scheme
- Your name (or your partner's) was on the bill
- You were getting the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit (even if you get Savings Credit as well)

If you qualify you should receive a letter by 24/12/15. You need to apply by 29/01/16, the letter will explain how. If you think you qualify, but do not receive the letter call **0345 603 9439**

Emergency Call Outs - "Can it Wait Until the Office Reopens?"

Please remember that our Out-of-Hours repairs service is for repairs that are generally EMERGENCIES and cannot wait until our office re-opens. These repairs attract a premium rate from contractors, often in excess of £100. It is your responsibility to ensure, BEFORE you call the Out-of-Hours Repairs Service, that the repair is an emergency, otherwise you could have an expensive bill to repay.



Emergency Repairs

A repair is an emergency if a delay in attending to it could represent a risk to health, safety or security, or could cause significant damage to property.

Examples include: Water ingress from another property/roof

- Removing faeces, bodily fluids or syringes from common areas
- Broken glass and/or broken window cords or safety catches
- Total loss of electrical power

Where households are elderly/vulnerable:

Loss of heating or hot water, faulty intercom systems or lifts

City Building and James Frew will be carrying out limited Annual Gas Servicing over the festive period, last date is 24th December. All servicing will resume with James Frew on Wednesday 6th January and City Building on Monday 4th January. If contacted, we would appreciate your prompt response to provide access for AGS. It is essential that AGS is carried out in the early part of the new year.

Black Mould & Condensation, What you Should Know!

If you notice black mould in your home, it could be condensation. Condensation occurs from water vapour that cannot escape from the building. Moisture is always present in the air even if it cannot be seen and can come from, for example, using showers without opening window, cooking with uncovered pans or hanging wet clothes around your home to dry. Condensation occurs when the moist air comes into contact with a cold surface like a window, or wall where the air flow is reduced by furniture.



5 things you can do are:

- 1. Open windows in the morning to allow the moist air to leave and fresh air to enter.**
- 2. Keep trickle vents on windows open.**
- 3. Open windows when cooking/showering to allow moisture to escape.**
- 4. Dry clothes in a well ventilated area and keep windows open (not on radiators)**
- 5. In cold weather it is better to maintain a consistent level of heating throughout our home rather than extreme temperature changes, keep the heating on low when you are out.**

If you do get black mould, it can usually be wiped away with a moist cloth/diluted cleaning solution. If you have any questions, the Property Services Team would be pleased to help. Call us 0141 331 6652.

Major Works 2016-2020

Following consultation at the AGM, our Management Committee are now pleased to announce an ambitious £20m+, 5-year programme of works.

Early programme priorities include stonework repairs and lift replacements, followed by kitchen unit/boiler renewals in years 4 and 5.



The full programme will be available to view on our website from late January 2016 and we will be in contact with you in the New Year if works are planned at your address.

Please note that the programme is reviewed annually and subject to change, to take account of our repairs history and inspections.

For further information please contact our Asset Management Team on **0141 428 3241**

Christmas Word Search

I	L	I	G	U	V	B	L	I	J
K	I	S	L	E	I	G	H	C	E
I	G	K	F	B	L	S	B	H	T
C	H	N	S	C	V	T	C	R	O
F	T	T	E	N	N	F	D	I	Y
R	S	R	O	E	O	C	S	S	S
J	P	E	S	K	R	W	D	T	J
N	U	E	Z	B	Z	F	M	M	W
U	R	U	D	O	L	P	H	A	K
P	J	M	E	E	C	A	R	S	N



ELF TREE CHRISTMAS
RUDOLPH PRESENT SNOWMAN
LIGHTS SLEIGH TOYS

Restricted Access to Loft Areas

Please note that general access to the loft areas in the roof is not permitted.

These areas are for access by GW staff and appointed contractors for maintenance and repair only.

Loft hatches should be secured with a padlock hasp and staple, similar to the adjacent image.



If you notice that the lock has been tampered with or you have exceptional circumstances that would require access please discuss with our Property Services Team on 0141 331 6652



Don't be a dirty dog...owner!

Estate Services receive regular complaints about irresponsible dog owners who allow their pet to foul in common parts of our properties and on the streets of surrounding areas.

We have a few simple rules when it comes to keeping a dog:

- All dogs must be registered with our Estate Services Team (see below for details)
- Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times within back court and close areas.
 - Any 'accidents' must be cleaned up immediately
- No dogs allowed at Blythswood Court & no new dogs at St Vincent Terrace

The Estate Services Team work closely with Community Safety Glasgow to identify irresponsible dog owners.

Dog Fouling can be reported to Clean Glasgow on 0300 343 7027. You can also report anonymously using the Clean Glasgow online form, www.cleanglasgow.org.uk

To register your dog contact Karen Hillhouse on 0141 428 3245 or email khillhouse@glasgowwestha.co.uk



Unauthorised Parking

Car owners/drivers will know parking spaces are at a premium in the west end of Glasgow and it is therefore very unfair when some of these valuable spaces are taken up by un-roadworthy and abandoned vehicles, or by drivers who do not have permission to be in the car parking areas intended for residents.

We are working closely with GCC Abandoned Vehicle Dept. to have these vehicles removed.

If you require any further information please contact Estate Services Team on 0141 428 3245 or email khillhouse@glasgowwestha.co.uk



Car being removed from St Vincent Terrace

Recycling

Please recycle your old items this Christmas. For more info visit www.freecycle.org

Christmas Tree Recycling - If buying a real Christmas tree this year, from the **3rd-18th January** you can take your tree to any civic amenity/ recycling centre or Kelvingrove Park (adjacent to bandstand). The trees will be taken away to be chipped and shredded for use in local parks all over Glasgow.



Christmas Card Recycling - Disposing of your Christmas cards is very simple. Plain cards without glitter can be placed in your blue recycling bins. Morrison's, Sainsbury's and Tesco will also be offering Christmas card recycling schemes at some of their stores.



Christmas Bulk Uplift

As usual the Bulk service is suspended

over the Holidays from 18th Dec until 11th Jan.

GCC have advised anything reported after 19th November won't be uplifted until after the service resumes in January.





The Tenancy Sustainment Team will not be available on

Tuesday February 2nd 2016.

Our colleagues in Tenancy Management will be happy to help in any way they can.

How We Let Our Homes

Our Housing Allocations Policy provides information on how our properties are let.

This policy has recently been reviewed and minor changes were made, mostly to reflect changes in housing law.

There will be an opportunity at our ATC for you to find out more about these changes and to tell us what you think about them.

For further information, or a summary of our revised policy document please contact Laura Clapperton on 0141 331 6651.



cashforkids™
a helping hand for local children

Cash for kids grants are awarded to help with the cost of a Christmas treat for children. We are proud to announce that we put forward 113 applications on behalf of children in our local community.

We await confirmation from Cash for Kids in relation to payment and we hope to be contacting applicants in the coming weeks with news on the applications.



Festive Gifts

Our Santa helpers have been busy wrapping this years gifts. These will be delivered to our elderly and vulnerable tenants before the office closes for Christmas. **Enjoy!**

Rent Reward Scheme

September 2015 Draw:

Winner - Mr Brian Hammond

Runner up - Miss Alice Aird

Dates for Diaries - Annual Bonus payments will be issued to all those eligible week commencing 14/12/2015 with the last prize draw of the year also taking place on 14/12/15.

2016 prize draws - 18/03/16, 27/06/16 (AGM), 12/09/16 & 12/12/16.

For an application form please contact Chris Pill on 0141 331 6653.

Big thanks to all who provided feedback on the scheme.

Children's Festive Colouring Competition

Christmas is nearly here and our festive colouring competition is now open to any child in your household who is aged 14 or under !!!

An entry form is enclosed, if you need more copies please contact us on 0141 331 6650 or pop into the concierge offices or our main office.

(see opening hours on back page)

We look forward to seeing all the wonderful creative pictures!



Welfare Benefit Updates

For advice and assistance on any benefits issue please drop in to one of our monthly surgeries, or contact the Team on 0141 3316678 to make an appointment.

Welfare Benefits Surgeries (Surgeries will not run when the office is closed)		
Keith/Walker Court	1st Fri of the Month	10am - 11am
Hyndland	3rd Thurs of the Month	10am - 12noon
Blythswood Court	Last Thurs of the Month	9am - 11am
St Vincent Terrace	Last Tues of the Month	9am - 11am



This service can provide free, independent and expert help and advice for older people on lower incomes who cannot afford professional tax advice. **They will:**

- Check your tax codes are correct
- Make sure you're paying the right tax
- Help you understand HMRC letters
 - Look at the reason for any under-payments & what you can do next

If you are approaching 60 or older and have an income of less than £20,000, or if you are caring for an older person who meets these criteria and have a query about your tax just call **0845 601 3321** or go online **www.taxvol.org.uk**

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) & Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Claimants still receiving DLA will be contacted at some point about the need to claim PIP instead.

The DWP will be randomly selecting claimants in receipt of an indefinite award or a fixed term award, to notify them what they need to do to claim PIP.

If you have turned 65 after 8 April 2013, when PIP was first introduced, expect to be contacted by the DWP. **If you turned 65 before 8 April 2013 you will remain on DLA.**

Benefits Sanctions

If your benefits are stopped by the DWP you should receive a letter explaining why and about your right to appeal.

If you think there has been a mistake you should appeal this decision. You can call the DWP directly on **0345 600 3080** or if you would like some assistance call us on 0141 331 6665

Benefit Changes: Welfare Reform

Important changes from **APRIL** that you may not be aware of:

Removal of Pension Credit Assessed Income Period

Households on Pension Credit will need to report all changes in circumstances (that may affect benefit entitlement) as soon as the change occurs.

Freeze on Working-age benefits

The Government plan to introduce a **four-year freeze** to working age benefits whilst still protecting pensioners, and benefits related to the extra costs of disability.

Limiting backdating of Housing Benefit

All housing Benefit claims will be backdated for a **maximum of 4 weeks**.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2016

Our 2016 AGM will be held on
Monday 27th June 2016 at 6.30pm
at the **Sandyford Henderson Memorial Church,**
Kelvinhaugh Street.

To attend this event you must be a member of
Glasgow West Housing Association.

Contact Carol Nicol on **0141 331 6664** for a Membership application form.



Jim Michael Award 2016

This award was introduced in 2008 to recognise
the commitment of the exceptional people who
make a difference to our lives.

Nominations are accepted throughout the year.
Forms are available from the office or from our
website.

Please let us know if you
would like to nominate a
neighbour for this award to
say thank you for any help
and assistance they have
provided to you or the local
community.



Miss MacNeill, 14/15
Award Winner with Jim
Michael.

Christmas Gift Boxes

Thanks to all our staff who kindly donated items for
the Blythswood Care "shoe box" appeal.

These boxes are delivered to
people in need throughout
Eastern Europe & Pakistan
and bring a little joy at
Christmas time.



**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

WE RAISED £140



Committee Training Forum (CTF)

The CTF provides an opportunity for
any tenants and members of GWHA,
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.

The next CTF will be running in early
Spring and anyone interested in
joining should

contact
Carol Nicol, on
0141 331 6664.



Staff News/Updates



Welcome to Rachel
Black (pictured left), HR
Officer, who has
recently joined the
Business Development
Team.

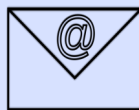
Congratulations to Ali Dowlatshah
who has been promoted
to the post of Project
Assistant in the Asset
Management Team.



Rent Increase Proposals for 2016/17

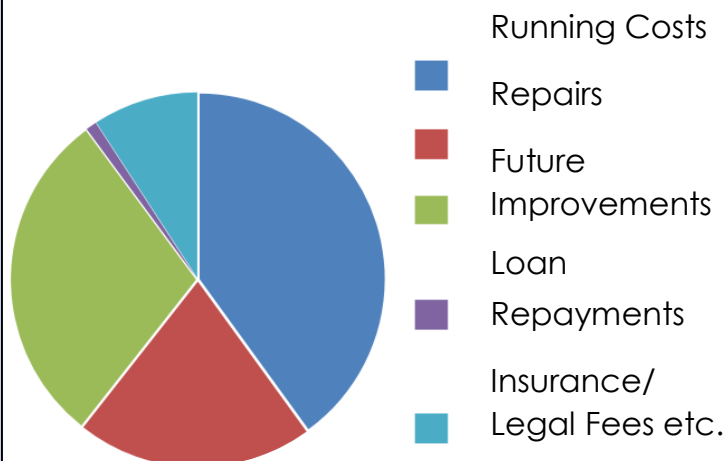
Conscious of the ongoing squeeze on household budgets, from increasing bills and government austerity measures, our proposed 1.75% rent increase for 2016/17 endeavours to balance our Management Committee concerns over rent affordability and comparability, with our commitment to improve services, including delivering an ambitious 5-year £20m+ investment programme (e.g. exceptional stonework repairs, including rebuilding the front elevation in some instances) and meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard) and at the same time supporting our contractors to achieve living wage. To keep the increase to 1.75%, the amount we aim to set aside for future major repairs has been reduced, and our efforts this next year will therefore be around identifying further efficiencies to make up this shortfall and mitigate the impact over the longer term. An increase of 1.75% equates to an average of £1.41 per week. Each 0.25% increase equals £13,500.

This article provides only a brief summary of the things that influence our annual rent review. More detail will be presented at our ATC on Saturday 23/01/16 and we encourage you to come along to this very important Event to take part in the discussions. If you are unable to attend, please write to us, or telephone your Housing Officer with your comments. Alternatively, you could arrange an appointment with a member of staff or you could complete the tear off slip on the back page of the newsletter, send us an email at admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk or a message via Facebook.



All comments we receive are reported to our Management Committee (MC), with the final decision on the rents for 2016/17 made at the MC Meeting on the 26/01/16. The rent increase will apply from 28/03/16. If you have the right to a registered rent, the increase will be reflected in the amount we request from the Rent Registration Service when your rent is next due for review.

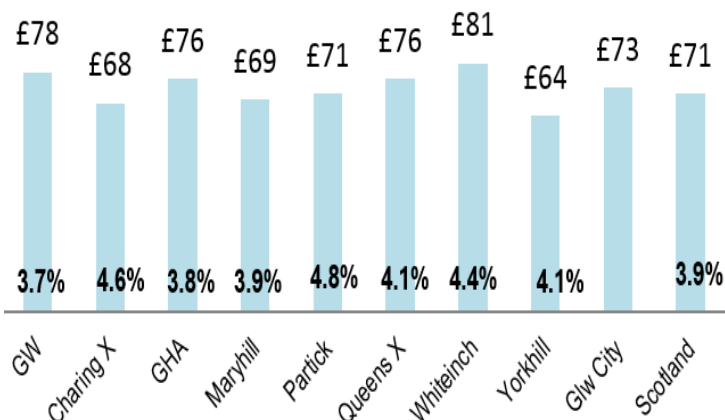
Costs 2016/17: £6.33m estimate



How much does it cost to provide services?

Rents are our main source of income and we estimate that we will need £6.33m next year to cover our costs, which include repairs/improvements to your home and managing tenancies. We monitor our costs very closely to make sure we get value for money and since April 2015 we have saved around £65,000 through our robust procurement processes. Our rent increase, although not linked directly to inflation, is a question we are often asked: in September RPI was 0.08% and CPI (inflation) was -0.01%.

Average Weekly Rents



How do our rents compare with others?

At an average £78 per week, our rents are currently higher than those of the other landlords, although, without exception, our 5-year average increase is lower (noted on bar chart) and this reflects our ongoing focus on identifying efficiencies in the way we operate. Comparison information is available by selecting "**statistical information**" from the "**find and compare landlords**" tab on the Scottish Housing Regulator's website www.scottishhousingregulator.co.uk.

Are our rents affordable?

Based on the current measure of affordability, our rents are affordable to 90-93% of recently surveyed working households. Unfortunately there has been a delay in the Scottish Federation of Housing Association's (SFHA) research into an alternative to the current Housing Benefit dependency measure of affordability. This project is however now on track and we will report progress as soon as possible. In the interim, our in-house specialist benefits advisors are available to meet with households to ensure full income entitlement.

Pass Rate	2015	2013	2012	2011
16 hr	90%	74%	84%	91%
35 hr	93%	92%	93%	98%

Affordability Definition:

For a rent (including any housing benefit eligible service charge) to be affordable, households with one person (head of household or partner) working 35/16 hours or more should only exceptionally be dependent on Housing Benefit in order to pay it.

TEAR OFF SLIP: RENT INCREASE PROPOSALS 2016/2017

Do you think the proposed 1.75% (average £1.41 per week) is reasonable? **YES / NO**

If not, what level of increase do you consider would be reasonable? _____% per annum or £ _____ per week

If this is less than the proposed 1.75%, where should we make savings?

Would you consider paying more for us to provide any of the following services?

- An additional £1.00 per week to accelerate back-court/environmental improvements **YES / NO**
- An additional £1.00 per week for introduction of "wheelie bins"? **YES / NO**
- Anything else? _____

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

Thank you for your comments



Money & Benefits Advice - Tuesday's @ 9.30 –

10.30: If you are looking for independent money advice why not pop into this workshop for help with your benefits or money management.

Digital Friends Club - Thursday's @ 2pm - 3pm:

You can learn how to use computers, laptops, iPads/tablets, smart phones and any other digital device. Everything is tailored to you and is at your own pace.

Work Club - Friday's @ 1pm - 2pm: Help with:

Job searches, Work skills, interview skills, CV writing & Confidence Building

All workshops are free and are held at

Anderston Community Action, 76 St Vincent Terrace.

Email: anderstoncommunityaction@gmail.com

Tel: 07772 494597

Quit smoking & save money for Christmas!

Specialist support available to help you stop smoking. No appointment necessary. For more information, telephone 0141 232 2110 or text "Quit" for free to 60002.

Woodside Health Centre

Mondays 11-1pm

Drumchapel Health Centre

Wednesdays 12-4pm

Partick Community Centre for Health

Wednesdays 6pm



Alcoholics Anonymous
Great Britain

DRINK SMART

If you or someone in your family need help with a drinking problem either phone alcoholics anonymous, **FREE on 0800 9177 650**, or for more information visit the webpage

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Alcoholism affects the whole family, not just the drinker. If you need help & support contact the **AlAnon** helpline

020 7403 0888



DRY JANUARY

Can you stay off the booze for 31 days?

Last year over 2 million people cut down on their drinking in January and benefitted from significant health benefits including weight loss and better sleep, to having more money in their pocket – what have you got to lose?

You're more likely to stick with it and feel the benefits if you sign up, so take the challenge & banish the booze!

www.dryjanuary.org.uk

Paying your Rent

At this time of year, there are often competing priorities, with rising fuel costs and other household expenses.

Please make sure you budget for your

December & January Rent.

Don't fall into rent arrears over Christmas.

If you need advice, don't wait till it's too late. Please contact the office **NOW! Call 0141 331 6650 (Option 3)**

5 Royal Crescent Glasgow G3 7SL

Tel: 0141 331 6650 • Fax: 0141 331 6679

Email: admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk • Website: www.gwha.org.uk

Office opening hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday - 9am to 4pm.

Tuesday - 11.30am to 4pm.

Appointments are available at other times on request.

Registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator HEP 126.
Registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 1955 RS.

Registered as a Scottish Property Factor No. PF000328

Registered as a Scottish Charity SC001667

