



Newsletter



December 2014

GLASGOW WEST HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year
From the Committee and Staff of Glasgow West Housing Association Limited

15th Annual Tenants Conference (ATC)

Sandyford Henderson Church, Kelvinhaugh Street
Saturday 24th January 2015 - 11am - 1pm



Invitations for this very important Event will be with you around mid-January 2015. As always we have lots to talk to you about, including the rent proposals for 2015/16 and our plans and priorities for the future. The GW Bookworms will be invited to this year's ATC for the first time, and the winners of our much coveted Good Close/Garden Competition will be announced, making this 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.

Office Closure Dates

Our offices (and the Hyndland concierge station) will be closed on the following dates: **Monday 22/12/14 from 4pm till Tuesday 06/01/15 at 9am.**

Please note that our offices will also be closed on **Tuesday 17/03/15** for staff training.

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



Emergency Numbers

Emergency numbers are available on our office answer phone and on the 2015 calendar accompanying this newsletter.

Paying Your Rent

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

Please make sure you budget for your **December and January rent**, & that you don't fall into rent arrears.

If you need advice on paying your rent or benefit eligibility, don't wait until it's too late. Please contact the office **NOW**

Committee Training Forum (CTF)

We are delighted to welcome 5 tenant volunteers to the CTF programme due to start in January 2015. They attended an information session on Wednesday 05/11/14,

If you're interested in finding out a bit more about the Association, how decisions are made, and how you can influence the decisions, why not register for the Committee Training Forum.

The Training is held at our offices and each session lasts for about 2 hours, over about 4-6 evening sessions and will be held the second Wednesday of each month.

The programme is due to start in January 2015. There is still time to join, so if you're interested and would like more information, please contact Carol Nicol on 0141 331 6664.



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.

“Can it Wait Until the Office Reopens?”

Please remember that our Out-of-Hours repairs service is for repairs that are genuine EMERGENCIES and cannot wait until our office re-opens. These repairs attract a premium rate from contractors, often in excess of £100.

Before you call the Out-of-Hours Repairs Service, please consider the following criteria, 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. Also lifts at 640 Argyle St/40 Bank St)



Broken Window



Water Ingress

Electrical Faults

Often contractors are called to attend electrical faults, ranging from a total loss of electricity within the property, to partial loss, for example: electrical sockets not working.

Unless your neighbours are also affected by the same issue, it is very likely the fault lies with an appliance in your home, usually a kettle, washing machine, vacuum cleaner or hairdryer. Before you call a contractor, if the consumer unit in your home is accessible, you can test this yourself by unplugging the appliance and then “flicking the switch” in the circuit board back to the ON position. This can be a process of trial and error until the faulty appliance is identified.

For a demonstration on the consumer unit, please refer to our website www.gwha.org.uk or contact our Property Services Team on 0141 331 6652 for further advice.



A typical consumer unit

Emergency/Winter Information

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



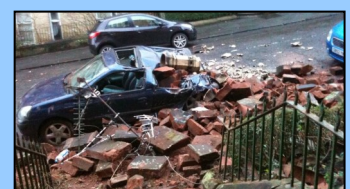
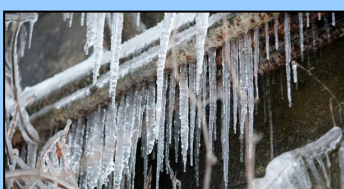
- Set the thermostat on your central heating to at least 10°C (50°F)
- Leave the doors in each room open as this allows warm air to circulate around your home

If you have a burst pipe:

- **Phone Emergency Telephone Numbers:** see the enclosed calendar or call the 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.

HOLIDAYS OVER THE FESTIVE PERIOD

If you are going away over the winter months please inform us and if possible, leave an Emergency Contact number. Please also check that your windows and doors are secure, that household appliances are unplugged and that gas cooker/hob is definitely switched off.



Keep Safe the Winter

With winter upon us, and opportunistic thieves on the prowl, the security of your home and that of your neighbours is of paramount importance. Don't give thieves a chance:

- Always lock windows and doors when you go out, even if it's only for a few minutes.
- 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.

For further information, contact the Crime

Prevention Officer at your local police office or call 101 if you have any specific concerns.



Household Contents Insurance

We do not insure your furniture, belongings or decorations against fire, theft, vandalism or accident (burst pipes etc.) As a GWAHA tenant you can access THISTLE contents insurance scheme (designed for tenants in Scotland). Premiums can be as low as £54.00 per year, or even less if you are 55 years old or over.

Please contact the Property Services Team on 0141 331 6652 for more information about the scheme or to get an application form.



Rent Reward Scheme Members

Please send us confirmation that you have paid your current house contents insurance policy and we will contribute £25 towards the cost.

Festive Refuse Collection

Glasgow City Council (GCC) advise that there will be disruption to refuse collection over the festive period.

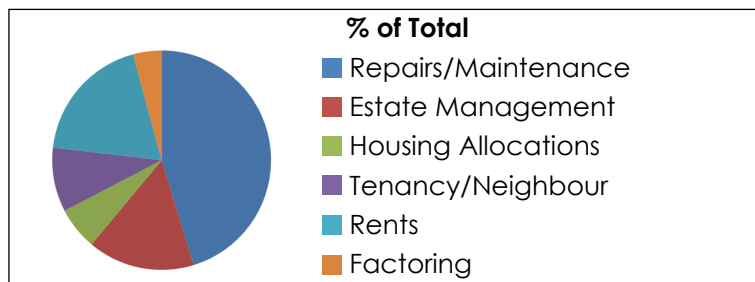
Household refuse collection will continue although the day your rubbish is collected may change.

If your rubbish remains uncollected you should contact GCC on 0141 287 9700.

There will be no bulk uplift service over Christmas so please do not leave any bulk items out as they will not be collected. Once the service resumes any bulk items should be left in the back court and a call made to GCC to arrange collection, usually within 14 days. Always remember to get a job number.



Complaints



A total of 110 complaints were registered between April and September, as we improve our recording of complaints to comply with the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman's (SPSO) model Complaints Handling Procedure. Two complaints were investigated externally: the first of these was submitted by a Former Tenant to the SPSO and was "not upheld". The second was submitted to the Home Owner Housing Panel, with a Property Factors Enforcement Order issued. As with all complaints, these concluded with a review of learning/procedures to reflect the outcome and experiences.

Over the next few months, our focus will be on improving our average response times of 14 days (stage 1) and 30 days (investigation) and we will report further on this in our future newsletters.

A copy of our complaints guidance leaflet is available from our website, or on request from the office.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of our service, please give us the opportunity to make amends.



Rent Reward Scheme Draws

Contact Kevin Crawford on **0141 331 6653** for an application form.

Dates for Diary

Annual Bonus payments will be issued to all those eligible week commencing 8/12/2014 with the last prize draw of the year taking place on 15/12/2014.

Prize draws next year are:
18/03/15, 27/06/15 (AGM),
14/09/15 & 14/12/15.



Sajjad Ahmed - Runner up.
September Draw

Festive Gifts

GW "Santa's Helpers" busy at work wrapping up the festive gifts, ready to bring some festive cheer to our elderly/vulnerable residents.

Enjoy with our best wishes!



KEEP WARM THIS WINTER

It's the time of year when Glasgow's older citizens can apply for their £100 **"affordable warmth dividend"**

If you have received this payment before Glasgow City Council will write to you to let you know it's available again, there will be a form that you will need to sign and return in order to receive the payment.

If you have not received the dividend before and you will be 80 or older by March 2015 you will be eligible to apply & Glasgow City Council will write to you directly.

If you are not contacted and think you are eligible to receive the dividend please let us know.

Other grants to help keep you warm this winter include the **"warm home discount scheme"**, if you are eligible you will receive a letter by 24th December telling you what you will need to do to receive a discount on your electricity bill.

We will be writing to all our eligible tenants to let them know about these schemes but for advice and assistance please contact:

Garry Saunders on
0141 331 6662



Festive Colouring Competition

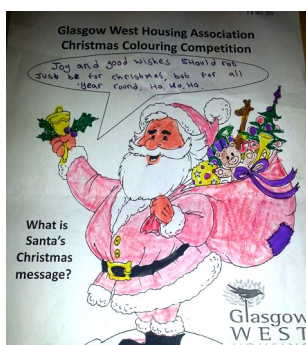
Christmas is nearly here and in true GWHHA tradition, our festive colouring completion is now open!!!

We love judging this competition each year and look forward to seeing all the wonderful creative pictures.

The competition is 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).

Good luck!



One of 2013's winning entries by Eiman Siraj

Commonwealth Legacy



GLASGOW 2014
XX COMMONWEALTH GAMES

We are pleased to announce that 23 GWHHA tenants have benefited from the Glasgow 2014 Games Legacy and over 120 items of furniture and household items have been delivered.

The Kirkwood Family:

"We are over the moon with the wardrobe, bedside lamp and bedside cabinet we have received. These were items that we needed and on seeing the article in September's newsletter it was perfect timing. My son is really happy.

Thanks to The Commonwealth Games Legacy for their generosity and GWHHA for organising this."



Cash for Kids

Cash for Kids grants are awarded to help with the cost of a Christmas treat for children. We are proud to announce that GWHHA put forward a record breaking 75 applications on behalf of children in our community.

We await confirmation from Cash for Kids in relation to payment and will be contacting the recipients of successful awards in the coming weeks.



Local Benefit Office

You can access advice about your housing benefit & council tax at any Glasgow City Council office dealing with these benefit claims. The branches local to most of our tenants are listed here however there may be an office more handy for you, see the "Report, Pay, Apply" section on the website www.glasgow.gov.uk.

Anniesland	841 Crow Road
City Centre	45 John Street
Maryhill	1 Gairbraid Ave

Have you been working and claiming benefits?

The Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) and HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) have been working together to identify benefits fraudulently claimed. GCC now have access to "Real Time Information" about your income.

This means if you have been claiming for housing benefit **and have failed to declare or have under declared your earnings** (either from work or a private pension) you may have been paid benefits that you are not entitled too.

If you are found to have fraudulently claimed housing or council tax benefit you will be sent an overpayment request and expected to repay this to GCC. Any overpayment will be backdated to April 2013.

If you require any advice or assistance in relation to this we will endeavour to help and make sure your benefit entitlement has been calculated correctly. However, there will be **no right of appeal** if it has been found that you have falsely declared your income.



Welfare Benefit Surgeries. Please drop in on following dates:

Keith/Walker Court	1st Friday of the Month	10AM - 11AM	06/02/15 • 06/03/15 • 03/05/15
Hyndland	3rd Thursday of the Month	10AM - 12NOON	15/01/15 • 19/02/15 19/03/15 • 16/04/15
Blythswood Court	Last Thursday of the Month	9AM - 11AM	29/01/15 • 26/02/15 • 26/03/15
St Vincent Terrace	Last Tuesday of the Month	9AM - 11AM	27/01/15 • 24/02/15 • 24/03/15

Training Opportunity.

In the New Year GWAH will be offering free training sessions to all Tenants who would like to become members of our Lettings Initiative or simply find out a bit more about what a Lettings Initiative is, for further information

please contact
Avril on
0141 331 6657.

Our Blythswood Court
Letting Initiative leaflet.



Recycling



Got something new for Christmas, well how about "freecycling" the old. Don't add to landfill - please recycle. For more information visit www.freecycle.org

Christmas Tree Recycling

Real trees can be taken to any civic amenity/recycling centre or Kelvingrove Park (near the bandstand, as per signage, from the **3rd - 19th January**. The trees will be taken away to be chipped and shredded for use in local parks all over Glasgow.

Christmas Card Recycling

Recycle your Christmas cards this year, Plain cards without glitter can be placed blue recycling bins. Morrison's, Sainsbury's and Tesco will be offering Christmas Card recycling schemes in some of their stores.

Changes to Right To Buy Rules

The Scottish Government has now published a guide for tenants on the changes to the Right to Buy Rules, applicable from 01/08/16. The guide is available at this link:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/11/8564>



City Centre Flats for Rent

These 1 bedroom flats are offered on a Scottish Secure tenancy with an average rent of just £75.68 per week. Fully refurbished in 2009, benefitting from double glazing, gas central heating, as well as CCTV and a concierge



service. Additional incentives offered to GWhA tenants include a lucrative rent reward scheme (Annual bonus of £52, quarterly prize draws and contents insurance incentive). Incentives are subject to full compliance with the tenancy agreement.

For further information, please contact Laura Clapperton, Services Officer on 0141 331 6651



Investment Programme 2014/15

It's full steam ahead with our programme, as we near completion of the march-in visits for the window, kitchen, bathroom, central heating and rewiring works. We start on site with the programme of works at Academy Bank and White Street/Gardner Street. Our thanks to all those who have provided access to date; we look forward to now delivering on the improvements we promised.

We understand these works can be inconvenient, however, we are pleading again for your co-operation and participation. This work is important and ensures your home is protected for future generations. If you need some reassurance about the work programme, please contact our Property Services Team on 0141 331 6652.

The programme for 2015/16 will be finalised by March 2015 and will focus primarily on lift and window replacement works.



Kitchen Before



Kitchen After



GWhA Apprenticeship Opportunities

Are you aged 16 – 24 ✓

Would you like an excellent career opportunity ✓

Receive formal training ✓

On the job work experience ✓



Then please contact Ciaran our Property Services Officer on 0141 331 6652 or email RService@glasgowwestha.co.uk

Opportunities are available in the fields of construction and early years nursery care we will be holding an introductory event in our offices in the New Year and we would be delighted if you would join us.



Further information is available on GWhA website www.gwha.org.uk or scan QR code above.



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 Charity SCO01667. Registered as a Scottish Property Factor No. PF000328



Staff News/Updates

GWAH welcomed Ciaran O'Grady, Services Officer to our Property Services Team.



Andrew helping out the G3 Growers

After 6 years with GWAH, we wish Andrew Watson all the best as he leaves to take up new challenges.

Jim Michael Award

This award was introduced in 2008, our 30th Anniversary Year, to recognise the commitment of the exceptional people who make a difference to our lives.

The main criterion for "Nomination" is that the person must have made a positive impact on the life/lives of people living within our local communities. It may be that the person volunteers in the running of a local club; is an exceptionally good neighbour, or has just performed some small act of kindness that made a difference to someone living within the community. The person does not need to live in a GWAH property in order to be nominated.

The closing date for nominations is 31/03/15 and forms are available from our office or our website, www.gwha.org.uk under Tenants/Tenants Awards.



Mrs. Isobel Campbell, winner of the 2013/14 Award, with Linda Reid, Chief Executive.

Charitable Activities/Community Fund

A McMillan Coffee morning was held at our Central Office on 25/09/14 with staff donating home baking and shop bought goodies. The total raised was **£112** and GWAH would like to thank all staff for their generosity. For more information about McMillan Cancer Support, please visit our website: www.gwha.org.uk



Annual General Meeting 2015

Our 2015 AGM will be held on Saturday 27 June 2015 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.

Computers & Learning

Argos offers Free Tablets & Broadband on new Digital Skill Workshops

Argos aims to help up to 10,000 UK adults who lack digital skills by providing them with a 90 minute workshop. The Glasgow store on Sauchiehall St is offering this training but places are going fast – **call 0345 600 4408** to book your place on this course.

The workshop costs £20 but on completion you will receive a free tablet and a voucher redeemable for free broadband with TalkTalk for one year (optional)*.

You will learn the basics of how to:

- Use a tablet
- Get online and access at least one website
- Create an e-mail account
- Understand how to use apps
- Know how to stay safe online
- Know where to go for further local support.

*Tablet: Proscan 7" dual core internet tablet, 8GB.

*TalkTalk Simply Broadband for 12 months (usually £3.50 pmth), free installation and router. Customers still required to pay line rental at £15.95 a month.

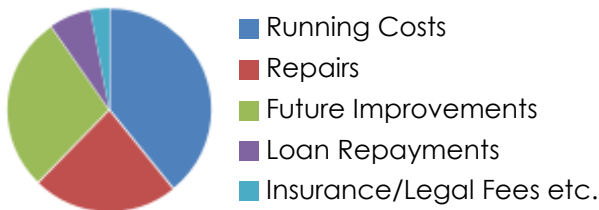
Rent Increase Consultation for 2015/16

We need to increase rents by 3.1% from 28/03/15 to continue to provide the services you currently receive. This is an average increase of £2.29 per week. An increase of more than £2.29 per week will be necessary if you would like us to provide new or enhanced services.

This is a brief summary of the things that influence our annual rent review. More information will be presented at our ATC on Saturday 24/01/15 and we encourage you to come along to the ATC to comment on our rent proposals. 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 below, 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 2015/16 made at the MC Meeting on the 27/01/15. The rent increase will apply from 28/03/15. 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.

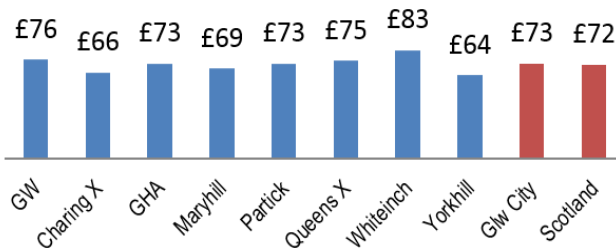
Costs 2015/16: £6.33m estimate



How much does it cost to provide services?

Rents are our main source of income and we estimate that £6.33m is needed 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. Our rent increase, although not linked directly to inflation, is a question we are often asked: in September RPI was 2.3% and CPI was 1.2%

Average Weekly Rents



How do our rents compare with other Housing Associations?

At an average £76 per week, our rents are similar to those of other local housing associations, and with the Glasgow City and Scottish averages. This 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.

Affordability: Definition

With the introduction of the under-occupancy charge (bedroom tax), it is no longer possible for us to assess affordability in the way we have done in the past. Until the new definition is available in 2015, we will reference the results of recent surveys.

Pass Rate	2013	2012	2011	2010
16 hr	74%	84%	91%	99%
35 hr	92%	93%	98%	

Are our rents affordable?

This always presents the biggest dilemma for our Management Committee, with our in-house specialist benefits advisors available to meet with households to ensure full income entitlement. We are monitoring closely the Scottish Federation of Housing Association's affordability research and we will publish the proposed new definition as soon as it is available.

TEAR OFF SLIP: RENT INCREASE PROPOSALS 2015/16

Do you think the proposed 3.1% increase is reasonable? YES NO
 If not, what level of increase do you consider would be reasonable? _____% per annum £ _____ per week
 If this is less than 3.1%, where should we make savings? _____

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

An additional £1.50 per week for showers to be installed when we next upgrade your bathroom? YES NO
 An additional £1.00 per week for us to provide a decoration allowance during improvement works? YES NO
 An additional 25p per week for us to enhance the standard of properties we re-let? YES NO
 Anything else?

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

Thank you for your comments