



NEWSletter

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

FROM THE COMMITTEE AND STAFF OF GLASGOW WEST HOUSING ASSOCIATION

12th ANNUAL TENANTS CONFERENCE (ATC) 21 JANUARY 2012 11:00-1PM, MITCHELL LIBRARY



This continues to be a major event in our calendar and we look forward this year to welcoming the Argyle transferring tenants to their first GWA Tenants Conference. We have, as always, lots to consult with you on including our rent review proposals and our participation plans. The winners of the Good Close/Garden Competition will also be announced, making this an Event not to be missed.

Some households continue to be under-represented at our ATC, therefore, as well as welcoming back all our regulars, we are encouraging couples, people aged between 26 – 40 and black or minority ethnic households to come along this year. If you have any ideas that would entice more people to attend, please contact the Tenancy Services Team on 0141-331-6651 Tservices@glasgowwestha.co.uk

OFFICE CLOSURE DATES

Wednesday 21/12/11 from 4.00pm till Thursday 05/01/12 at 9.00am
Please note that our office will also close on Tuesday 20/03/12 for staff training

CONCIERGE/SHELTERED SERVICE

The Hyndland concierge station will be closed all day on 26th, 27th and 28th December and on 2nd, 3rd and 4th January 2012.
Services will be provided throughout the festive period as normal, at Blythswood Court, St Vincent Terrace and Keith Court.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Emergency numbers are displayed on our office answer phone and on the 2012 calendar accompanying this Newsletter.

RENT REWARD SCHEME

Please note the ATC date for your diary as your attendance counts towards your membership requirement to **participate in at least one GWA activity per year.**

The annual bonus payments will be issued in the week beginning 12/12/11 for all members who have fully complied with membership criteria over the last year. The final quarterly prize draw of the year will take place on 13/12/11, just in time for Christmas!

Next year's quarterly draws will take place on: 13/03/12; 23/06/12 (AGM); 11/09/12 and 11/12/12

Further information and an application form for membership are available from our offices.

CHILDREN'S COLOURING COMPETITION



The colouring competition is enclosed and we look forward to receiving lots of wonderful entries again this year. Entrants should be no more than 11 years old.

Remember to fill in your name and address and post/hand in entries to the office by 9.30am on Wednesday, 14/12/11 at the very latest. Please let us know if you need more copies of the competition for your budding artists!!

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

STAFF NEWS



GWA office based staff

From January 2012, there will be some changes to our staffing structure, with the aim of ensuring we continue to provide you with the high standards of service you currently receive. Our staff contact details are in the Calendar and we will provide further information on the new structure and teams at the ATC and in future editions of our Newsletter. In the meantime, please continue to contact us as normal.



Aubin Mwese graduate

Our congratulations to Aubin Mwese on his recent graduation and our best wishes to Lesley Gillespie who has taken up a promoted post at another housing association.

RECOGNISING EXCEPTIONAL EFFORTS

James Michael Award

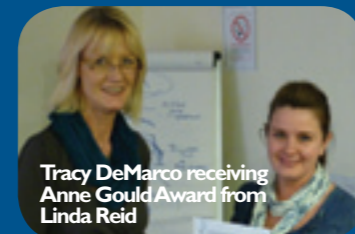


Christine Maclean winner of James Michael Award 2011

Closing Date for Nominations: 31/03/12

Nomination Forms, and further information about both Awards, is available from our offices or at www.gwha.org.uk, click on "Awards"

Anne Gould Award



Tracy DeMarco receiving Anne Gould Award from Linda Reid

Closing Date for Nominations: 26/02/12

ABANDONED PROPERTIES

If you haven't seen your neighbour around for some time and you are concerned that the property may have been abandoned, please advise our Tenancy Service Team on 0141-331 6651 to give us the opportunity to investigate. Abandoned properties can pose a risk to neighbouring homes.

RENT REVIEW

Please complete the tear-off slip and return to the office by Monday 16/01/12. Alternately, submit your comments by letter or email to: admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk. Also, look out for details of our twitter and facebook addresses in the ATC invitation which will be with you mid January.

1. Do you think our rent proposals are reasonable?	YES	NO		
If not, what do you consider would be reasonable?	%			
Where do you think savings should be made?				
• Day to Day Repairs Services	YES	NO		
• Improvement Works (kitchens/bathrooms etc)	YES	NO		
• Other, please advise?				
2. Would you consider paying more than the proposed increase for additional/enhanced services?	YES	NO		
If yes, how much more would you be willing to pay each week?	10p	20p	30p	40p
Where would you wish the additional income to be spent?				
Thank you for your comments.				

Name _____ Address _____

WINTER SECURITY

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 – thieves usually find them
- It gets dark around 4pm in winter... remember to leave a light on (ideally an energy efficient one!) if you are out at night
- Don't leave notes on the door saying you are out
- Never leave valuables lying around where they can be seen through a window
- Make sure the controlled entry door is kept shut and locked at all times and only allow a caller into the building if they are coming to see you

For further information, contact the Crime Prevention Officer at your local police station.

GRIT BINS

GWA is liaising with our local Councilors' and Glasgow City Council in seeking to have filled grit bins placed at appropriate locations around our housing stock, (Hyndland, St Vincent Terrace, Blythswood Court, Keith Court/Walker Court), for use by tenants and residents. Please contact our Property Services Team on 0141-331 6652 or your local concierge team for further information, advice or assistance.

COMMUNITY VENUES

The Meeting Place, GWA offices
Avalon Resource Centre, Cleveland Street

Local GWA community venues available for hire, at competitive rates (and free of charge to GWA Resident's Groups)

For further information contact GWA offices on 0141-331 6650

WINTER EMERGENCY 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 calendar or call the office answer phone
- **Turn off stops cocks:** if you are unsure where Stop Cocks are situated, telephone the Association and staff will advise
- **If water is in contact with any electrical fittings:** Turn off the power at the mains

If you are going away over the festive period, please let us know, and, if possible, leave an emergency contact number.

HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE



In recent years, Christmas and New Year has seen insurers receiving up to 50% more claims than expected as a result of freezing weather. For more information on a home contents insurance package developed for tenants, contact This Tenants Contents on lo-call 0845 601 7007 or email: thistenantcontents@jltgroup.com

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EMAIL: admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk WEBSITE: www.gwha.org.uk

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GWHA GARDENING GROUP



The GWHA Gardening Group, established by residents at the 2011 ATC, is keen to recruit new volunteers to share experience and gardening tips. If you are a GWHA resident (tenant or owner), irrespective of whether you have your own garden, or a window box, the GWHA Gardening Group would be delighted to hear from you. The Group would particularly welcome members from the Argyle stock transfer properties. Please contact Andrew Watson on 0141-331 6672 for further information and contact details.

GWHA GARDENING PANEL

Our Management Committee (MC) commends those residents who take the time to upkeep and improve their common areas for the benefit and enjoyment of their neighbours. To recognise and support these efforts where possible, our MC would like to establish a GWHA Gardening Panel that provides advice and recommendations to Committee on issues such as the annual Good Close/ Gardening Competitions. If you know someone independent who may be interested in participating in a couple of Garden Panel meetings a year, please get in touch with Andrew Watson on 0141-331 6672

ARE YOU PAYING TOO MUCH FOR YOUR UTILITY SUPPLIES?

Switchmyenergy.co.uk is a new website dedicated to helping tenants and homeowners get the lowest price for their electricity and gas supplies. The website is easy to use and because prices are shown from every supplier in the UK and every tariff available in your area, it is 100% independent. If you'd prefer to speak with someone, call the helpline on Freephone 0800 410 1262.

STREET ROBBERIES

Community Police officers have asked that we alert you to a recent increase in the number of street robberies. As the nights become darker earlier, please be vigilant when you are travelling to and from your homes.

When you are out and about

- * Pay attention to what is going on around you.
- * Don't take short cuts through darkened parks, alleyways or across waste ground.
- * Cover up any expensive jewellery, electronic equipment (particularly mobile phones & mp3 players), and personal valuables.
- * Remember that wearing headphones while you are walking will not only stop you from being aware of other people around you, but may also make prospective thieves aware of your valuables.
- * Carry any bags close to you with the opening facing towards you. If someone grabs it, let go, if you hang on you could get hurt.
- * Report any suspicious behaviour to your local police office as soon as possible.
- * Do not allow access via intercom to strangers.
- * If you have a spy hole and door chain, use these before opening the door to unexpected visitors.
- * Report any damaged or broken close lighting to the Association.

MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMES

Please contact our Property Services Team on 0141-331 6652 for more details of our works programmes.

Cyclical Maintenance

Roof inspection and gutter cleaning will commence shortly. Common close painting and 5 yearly electrical inspection work will be tendered within the next month, with work due to commence early in 2012.

Major Repairs/Improvements

Early in the New Year, we will be tendering the next phase of our major repairs programme, involving window replacement works to a number of properties, as well as the outstanding kitchen/bathroom and rewiring works to the Argyle transfer properties. It is our intention to commence the works around Spring-time and we will be in contact with you directly if works are scheduled for your home. Please accept our apologies for the delay in progressing this programme.

BENEFITS ADVISORS – SURGERIES

Please contact Jamie Simpson on 0141-331 6662 to make an appointment for a confidential benefits assessment or for advice on planning for changes to the benefits system. Alternatively, you may wish to drop-in to the surgeries on the following dates:

Hyndland Concierge Station	Avalon Resource Centre 48 Cleveland Street	Blythwood Concierge Station	St Vincent Terrace Concierge Station	Keith Court Sheltered Housing Office
10 am- 12 noon	9am- 12 noon	2pm-4pm	2pm – 4pm	10-12
19/01/12, 16/02/12 15/03/12	12/01/12, 02/02/12 01/03/12	26/01/12, 23/02/12 29/03/12	31/01/12, 28/02/12 27/03/12	03/02/12, 02/03/12 06/04/12

BULK UPLIFT

We are aware that changes to Glasgow City Council's bulk uplift service have now been implemented. Residents who are unable to take bulk items to the local recycling centre, must now contact GCC's Customer Care Centre on 0141-287 9700 (or complete an online request at www.glasgow.gov.uk/recycling), with items placed for collection in the back-court area next to the bin store. If you have any concerns regarding this service change, you are encouraged to report this directly to GCC and specifically to your Local Councillor. If you require advice or assistance, please contact GWHA.

PAYING YOUR RENT

At this time of the year, there are often many competing priorities, with rising fuel costs and other household expenditure. Please make sure you budget for your December and January rent and that you don't fall in to arrears that become difficult to manage. If you need advice on paying your rent, don't wait until it's too late: please contact our Tenancy Services Team on 0141-331 6651. If you need information on benefit eligibility, please contact our Benefits Advisors for a confidential benefits assessment.

NHS DIGITAL

NHS 24 has launched a new digital TV channel with the aim of improving patients' access to health information and advice from the comfort of their own home. The channel can be accessed through Freesat and Sky (community channel 539) and Virgin Media (home button, interactive number 7).

AFFORDABLE WARMTH DIVIDEND £100 FOR QUALIFYING RESIDENTS

This is a newly introduced scheme operated by Glasgow City Council to assist residents of the City with the additional costs associated with winter. In order to qualify, you must be 80 years of age or over by 29/02/12, living in Glasgow and in receipt of any amount of Pension Credit. Even if you are not yet 80 but will be before 29/02/12, you can make the application now.

Applications will be accepted from 22/11/11 until 29/02/12 and are assessed by your local Revenues and Benefits Centre. Anyone who meets the criteria is eligible including those living in residential homes and hospitals

In order to claim, you need 3 separate pieces of evidence, one confirming your date of birth, one proof of address and the third, proof that you receive Pension Credit. Examples include:

Birth Certificate
Passport
Drivers License
Utilities bill, bank statement or similar proof of address
Pension Credit award letter

Payment is made direct to your Bank account up until March 2012, depending on when your claim is processed.

Contact GWHA Benefit Advisors, Stephen or Jamie on 0141-331 6662, for further information or assistance in completing an application.

ANDERSTON HEALTH CLUB TUESDAYS: ANDERSTON/KELVINGROVE CHURCH

Annexe Communities deliver a weekly health club where all activities are free for the local community to enjoy. Please come along and join in the exercise programmes, health walks and cooking workshops, as well as enjoying complementary therapies such as indian head massage, reflexology or reiki therapy.

For more information contact the Project Development Worker, Sandra MacDowell on 0141-357 6747 or email sandra.macdowell@annexecommunities.org.uk

RENT REVIEW 2012/13

This article provides a brief summary of the information we will present to the ATC on 21/01/12 and you are encouraged to come along to participate in the rent review discussions.

Rent Setting Process

Following second stage transfer (2ST), GWHA operates with additional rent structures, with our rent proposals determined by a number of factors, including the commitments made to transferring tenants. These rent structures produce different outcomes for tenants, which is clearly not ideal, and we will be monitoring the impact of this over the longer term.

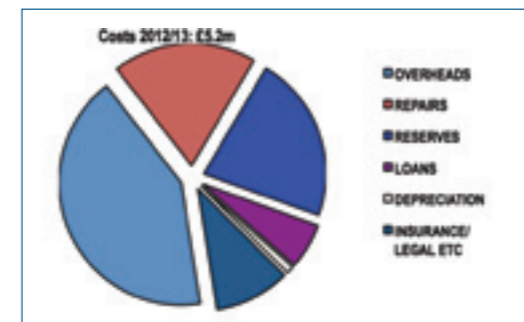
For transferring tenants, and for traditional tenancies where the rent is set directly by GWHA. If you are one of the few remaining tenants who have a right to a registered rent, the increase will be reflected in the amount we request from the Rent Registration Service when your rent is next due for review.

What are the rent review proposals?

For Hyndland and Argyle transferring tenants, the increase is determined by the 2ST Agreement, and will be a minimum of 5.2% and 6.2% respectively. These rents, unlike other GWHA rents, include the cost of services such as lifts, concierge service and cleaning.

For traditional GWHA tenants, the increase is determined by projected costs, affordability and comparability and will be a minimum of 4.3%. The cost of services is still to be added to these rents.

You should be aware that these are the minimum increases, with the ATC considering options for the introduction of new services that would incur increases beyond these levels. It is therefore very important that you attend the ATC and take the opportunity to influence these decisions. If are unable to attend, please let us know your thoughts by completing the tear-off slip in the newsletter, by emailing admin@glasgowwestha.co.uk or by contacting the office to arrange an appointment. We are also in the process of setting up a facebook and twitter account for you to provide feedback, and we will provide details of these in the ATC invitation



Costs

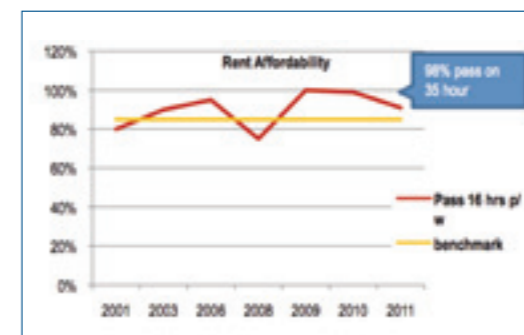
Rents are our main source of income and we need £5.2 m next year to cover anticipated expenditure. Costs are contained through close monitoring and ongoing efforts to achieve value for money.

To end of March 2011, £9.7m was invested in GWHA properties, with 98% meeting or exceeding the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. A further £4m planned major repairs investment will ensure all properties achieve this standard by the Government's 2015 target timescale.



Comparability

GWHA rents are comparable with those of other local landlords, and are lower than the Glasgow City and Scottish averages. This information is available to view by selecting Annual Statistical Return on www.scottishhousingregulator.co.uk. The 2ST rents, taking account of the % only, will appear higher this year, however, in terms of 3-year averages, the rents of Hyndland and Argyle transferring tenants have increased by 3.2% and 3.4% respectively, with a GWHA average of 4% in the same period.



Affordability

The affordability of rents always presents the biggest dilemma for our Management Committee (MC) and whilst any level of failure is of concern, unfortunately there may be instances where this is unavoidable. In these cases, a referral is made to our in-house benefits advisors to ensure the household is receiving full income entitlement. The SFHA's recommended affordability definition, based on households working 35 hours per week has been adopted by GWHA. The Association also continue to monitor the more challenging 16 hour definition