

# Yorkhill News

housing association ltd

WINTER 2018

The Newsletter of Yorkhill Housing Association Ltd



Merry  
Christmas

**from the staff and committee at  
Yorkhill Housing Association**



# 2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**This year's Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> August at 7pm in the Overnewton Centre.**

As required by our constitution, the Association's audited annual accounts were presented to the membership by our external auditors Scott Moncrieff, Chartered Accountants.

Members were informed that Yorkhill Housing Association's finances are in good shape with sufficient provision to meet all of its legal and regulatory obligations over the short and longer term. Copies of the annual accounts are available from the office or can be viewed on our website [www.yorkhillha.org](http://www.yorkhillha.org)

The membership approved the re-appointment of Scott Moncrieff as the Association's external auditors for 2018-19.

Electing the Management Committee for the year ahead is another legal requirement for the membership.

This year, three of our ten elected members retired and stood for re-election. As no other nominations for committee were received, Paul Marsden, Colin Armstrong and Billy Docherty were re-elected.

Following the AGM, the Management Committee elected office bearers and appointed co-optees for the coming year.

Dr Malcolm Green  
Colin Armstrong  
Robert Winning  
Paul Marsden  
Helene Fitzgerald  
John Gordon  
Billy Docherty  
Neil McPherson  
Dr Kyle White  
Gurmeet Mattu  
Philip Braat  
Grant McEwan

Chairperson  
Vice-Chair  
Secretary  
Treasurer

Co-optee  
Co-optee

We welcome new volunteers to help our existing members. If committee membership falls below seven, the Association must cease to operate within three months, and we are becoming quite vulnerable with our numbers.

No specialist knowledge or skills are needed, just an interest in helping the community, with the help and support of a large network of other volunteers throughout the country.

There are currently over 2,000 voluntary committee members in Scottish housing associations, every single one makes a difference.

If you have some spare time and think you might like to become involved, please contact the office for more information.



Neil McPherson and John Gordon were unavailable for the photograph





# Applications and Allocations 2015-18

Allocations	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Transfers	9	2	3	5
Waiting List	7	17	16	15
S5 Referrals	8	6	6	11
totals	24	25	25	31

Applications	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Total received	1448	368	317	380
On list 31 <sup>st</sup> March	2024	552	563	560

## Glasgow Housing Register

**In April 2017, Yorkhill Housing Association joined a group of thirteen Glasgow housing associations to form a pilot project for the North West Glasgow Housing Register.**

**The aim of the project was to provide a facility for housing applicants to make one application for several social landlords instead of having to apply directly to each one.**

Most Scottish local authorities operate some form of common register, but it is fair to say Glasgow's social housing sector is unique. There are sixty eight social landlords in the city, each has its own allocation policy.

The scheme was suspended in December 2017 after all participants found that demand had escalated beyond their organisations' ability to cope with the increased demand. In particular, Yorkhill Housing Association experienced a significant impact on its resources. During the three years prior to the launch

of the register, we had an average of 550 applicants on the waiting list at each year end. When the project was suspended at the end of 2017, there were over 2000 applications waiting to be assessed.

The Glasgow Housing Register is co-ordinated and supported by Glasgow City Council. The Association has advised the GHR Board that we do not see the current position provides value to our organisation, our tenants or housing applicants. The gap between demand and supply is much too disproportionate as our normal average annual turnover of properties is 25.

The Board has taken our concerns and those expressed by other participants on board. The Register will remain suspended until the key issues have been resolved.

In the meantime, the Association will only consider applications for housing that are made directly to the office.



# Cold Weather Advice

A few minutes reading the advice below could save expensive repairs and disruption....

## Frost Precautions

The best protection against frozen pipes is to keep your property heated. If you are leaving your property unoccupied during the day leave the heating on to maintain a reasonable temperature.

If you are leaving your property unoccupied for an extended period of time leave the heating on low, drain down the water system and leave access details with a neighbour in case of an emergency.

Stopcocks are usually located in the bathroom or kitchen but some may be in the attic area.

## Dealing with Burst Pipes

Try to turn off & isolate the water supply.

If water is affecting electrical points switch off power at the mains.

Open all taps to drain down the system

Contact the Emergency Plumber. Contact details are on the back page.

Remember if there is a severe frost then the plumber may not be able to respond immediately - they will attend as soon as possible.

Taking the above action will help to minimise any damage to the property. Do not call out more than one plumber - you may be recharged for abortive call-outs.

## How to Thaw Pipes

Gently heat the frozen section of pipe using an electric fan heater or hair dryer.

- DO NOT APPLY DIRECT FLAME
- DO NOT TURN ON THE CENTRAL HEATING BOILER OR IMMERSER.

Please remember that the Association's Buildings Insurance does not cover any house contents. Tenants are responsible for insuring their own contents against flood, fire or theft.



# 2018 Investment Programme

The Association's Investment Programme ensures that our properties are kept up to date with modern kitchens, bathrooms and energy efficient central heating systems.

During 2017-18, just under £200,000 was spent on investment works.

A similar programme is planned for the current year. We also hope to be able to proceed with window replacements in our C listed properties on Argyle Street.

	Completed 2017-18	Planned 2018-19
Bath /shower rooms	20	20
Kitchens	8	15
Boiler replacements	42	40
Full gas central heating	5	5

Feedback from tenants has been very positive.



## Common Cyclical Close Painting Contracts 2018/19 and 2019/2020

Common areas are scheduled for repainting on a cyclical basis to ensure that they are maintained in good condition and that the appearance of the common close does not deteriorate.

A tender exercise is currently in progress for common close painting in ten closes which should hopefully be onsite between February and March 2019.

Once tenders are returned owners' meetings will be called to discuss costs and agree a programme of works. In addition residents' meetings will also be called to discuss colour schemes for each of the properties involved.

A further 13 closes will be scheduled during 2019/20.

### Closes scheduled for early 2019 are:

1189 Argyle Street  
1201 Argyle Street  
1349 Argyle Street  
16 Blantyre Street  
20 Blantyre Street  
30 Blantyre Street  
12 Hastie Street  
20 Hastie Street  
11 Nairn Street  
1071 Sauchiehall Street

### Closes Scheduled for 2019/20 are:

42 Old Dumbarton Road  
48 Old Dumbarton Road  
64 Old Dumbarton Road  
74 Old Dumbarton Road  
94 Old Dumbarton Road  
98 Old Dumbarton Road  
104 Old Dumbarton Road  
49 Old Dumbarton Road  
57 Old Dumbarton Road  
63 Old Dumbarton Road  
1108 Argyle Street  
1120 Argyle Street  
1130 Argyle Street



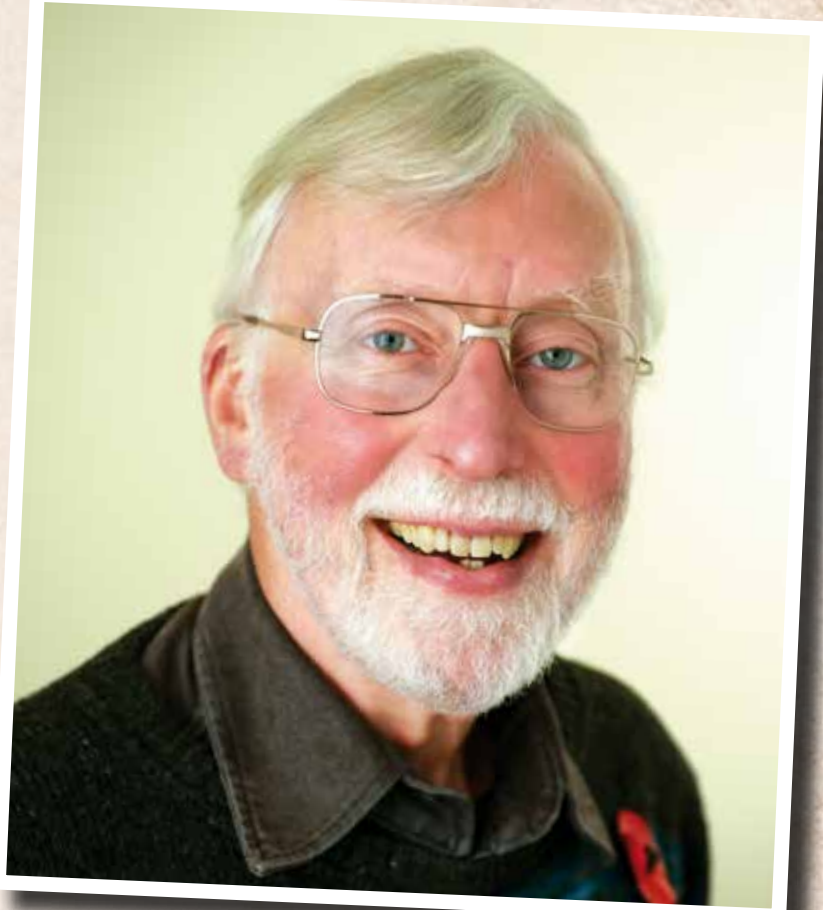


# *Our new Chairperson Dr Malcolm Green takes a trip down memory lane...*

Let me rewind more than forty years – forty-five, to be precise. A young Councillor, elected to Glasgow Corporation just a few months before, had managed, to his surprise, to overturn a sub-committee recommendation to demolish two streets in his ward and build new houses on the vacated ground. The alternative for which he had argued was to improve the existing 19<sup>th</sup> century tenements through installing the facilities they lacked, mainly an internal bathroom and toilet. In the members' buffet afterwards two senior Councillors told him firmly "this is a decision which will be regretted".

Fortunately for him, and for Glasgow, they were wrong. Rehabilitation rather than clearance and new-build, were on their way. And so was a new type of housing provider, the Community-Based Housing Association.

Looking back, I don't criticise those senior colleagues. They had grown up in tenements and I hadn't. And they were used to thinking in large-scale terms involving demolition and new build. The new boy, by



contrast, was simply listening to his constituents, who told him: 'Yes, of course we would like a bathroom of our own, but not if we have to move to another part of the city to get it.' As the new boy gradually acquired experience he came to see the bigger picture too, that Comprehensive Redevelopment took far too long to achieve and destroyed the community's infrastructure – schools, shops, churches – in the process. There had to be a better way.

Fortunately, there were officers in the Council thinking the same way, and their view

came gradually to prevail. They seized the opportunity presented by the Housing Act of 1974, not just to promote tenement improvement, but to create a quite new way of carrying it out, not through Council Departments but through Housing Associations consisting of local people.

Forty years on it's a little difficult to appreciate just how revolutionary this was. I recall a small meeting in which a couple of local people, an architect and a Council official were discussing the shape and design of the tenements of



those two streets I mentioned. The architect commented afterwards that this was the first time that he had actually had met the people who were to occupy the buildings he designed.

This contact with local people excited me and I wanted to be part of what was now emerging. After being elected to Strathclyde Regional Council, I found myself involved with one Housing Association after another, as, with the active encouragement of Glasgow District Council, they were established in the older tenement areas of the city. Almost everyone in my division – Partick & Anderston – lived in houses like this.

All these Associations did good work – under the shield of the District Council and the Housing Corporation – in acquiring and managing the improvement of one close after another. Fortunately, despite the often controversial policies of the Thatcher years, Glasgow's tenement rehab had cross-party support. I recall Malcolm Rikfind, a Scottish Office Minister at the time, telling us: "everybody loves you".

The upgrading in this way of thousands of properties has produced the trade skills, the management competences and the local accountability which didn't exist forty + years ago. Most importantly, it has kept communities viable and given them confidence in their future.

The challenges now emerging for every Community-Based Housing Association are to remain large enough to be viable but small enough to be local and accessible. We

need to be aware of the social and personal needs of our tenants, we must look after the environment, not just the bricks and mortar. And as the major housing provider in our area we have a role in social and community development.

I'm grateful to all the Associations with whom it has been my privilege to serve, and especially to Yorkhill, with whom my involvement has been longest, from its foundation in 1977 to the present. As a Councillor I was able to provide advice and smooth out difficulties, in retirement I have more opportunity to help with the detail.

I want to pay tribute to all Yorkhill's staff for their friendship and support over the years – but especially for the example of commitment to the quality of service they provide, to both tenants and owners. Our three most senior staff have over 100 years' service between them, but there has never been any sense that they have failed to move with the times or become reluctant to embrace new challenges. Yorkhill's demography has changed enormously in the last twenty years and the standards our tenants and owners have a right to expect are constantly rising.

Those on the Management Committee who are tenants of the Association are an essential touchstone for the quality of service we provide. Those who live outwith the area contribute a degree of objectivity and professional experience, which give balance to our decisions.

Yorkhill Housing Association celebrated last year its own fortieth birthday and retirement looms for several of its long-serving staff. Across the Housing Association movement thousands of people, professional and lay, have combined to realise the vision which emerged in those early years and which our successors, I am confident, will take up and continue. To YHA I'm most grateful for this opportunity to share my memories. Yorkhill people, individually and collectively, have played a major part in them and I wish you every success in the future.





# The Association's Complaints Handling Procedures (CHP)

**Our procedures for handling complaints are based on the guidelines issued by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman in 2012. Copies of our complaints procedures are available on request from the office or can be downloaded from our website [www.yorkhillha.org](http://www.yorkhillha.org)**

If a tenant or housing applicant is not happy with our decision about their complaint, it can be referred to the Ombudsman with a request for a review of the case. SPSO will not consider complaints until they have been through Stage 2 of the Association's Complaints Handling Procedures. There is a different appeal process for owners, their recourse is through the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland.

Complaints help us to improve our services in many ways and can arise for many reasons:

- If we have made a mistake
- If our systems or procedures are ineffective
- If our contractors are not providing the quality we expect
- If there is a problem that needs another organisation's attention

We record all complaints, and as an organisation try to learn from our mistakes.

The most common complaints we receive are not about services we have direct control over and although we still record those, we report them separately as they cannot be fully resolved by the Association.

The tables below show complaints received between 1<sup>st</sup> April- 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

**Table 1 – Services provided directly by YHA**

Nature of complaint	Stage 1 complaints	Stage 2 complaints	Upheld	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld
Close cleaning	3	-	1	1	1
YHA communication	4	-	2	1	1
YHA contractors /repairs	5	-	5	-	-
	12	-	8	2	2

Complaints that are resolved there and then or within 5 days are Stage 1.

Stage 2 complaints are ones that have not been resolved at Stage 1, need a manager's attention or need detailed investigation. Our target response time for Stage 2 complaints is 20 working days.

## Service Improvements April – November 2018

- Staff reminded of the importance of privacy for customers at reception
- Internal communication procedures improved
- Adaptation policy reviewed and procedures clarified
- Monitoring of landscape contractors increased





**Table 2 – Services not provided or controlled directly by YHA**

Subject	Complaints received	Nature of complaints
Bulk refuse in back court	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Items left for long periods of time</li> <li>• Items left and not reported for uplift</li> </ul>
Cleansing department	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operatives not removing rubbish from all bins</li> <li>• Mess left in close as bins are taken through</li> </ul>
Rodents	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing problem with mice infestation</li> <li>• Rats sighted in backcourt and close</li> <li>• Squirrels in loft space</li> </ul>
Neighbour nuisance / antisocial behaviour	32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise from loud music</li> <li>• Noise from fighting</li> <li>• Excessive door banging</li> <li>• Dog fouling</li> <li>• Smoking in common close</li> <li>• Drug dealing / consumption</li> <li>• Alcohol related behaviour</li> <li>• Harassment</li> <li>• Storage of items in common close area</li> <li>• Leaving black bags in close or outside bin shelters</li> </ul>

The Association works with private landlords, social services, council departments and other appropriate authorities on many of these situations.

In extreme or persistent cases of anti-social behaviour we will take appropriate legal action which can result in the loss of a tenancy.

## Changes to the way shops and businesses store their waste...

**Glasgow City Council introduced new measures which came in to effect on 15 September to help keep Glasgow cleaner, greener and safer.**

What does this mean for you?

### **Residents:**

- Pavements should be kept clear of large trade waste bins creating a much better environment.
- More bins in the backcourt if there are shops and businesses on the ground floor of your building.
- Any commercial waste left on the street for collection should be there for no longer than an hour and there should be no glass collections after 11pm each night.



### **Commercial Units:**

- This affects all businesses that, up until 15 September, stored or put their waste out for collection on road, including pavements and lanes.
- Your trade waste containers (bins, bags and recycling) should now be stored either within your premises or, by prior agreement with our Factoring Team, in the backcourt area.
- Collections should be frequent enough to ensure that waste is fully contained and stored within the relevant food/general/recycling bins for your unit.
- Waste for collection from the street should only be put out during pre-arranged timeslots, Glasgow City Council can advise you further on this.

If you have any questions or concerns about these changes please contact Anne or Nicole on 0141 285 7910.



# Removal of Bulk and Household Rubbish from common areas

The disposal of bulk waste in backcourts continues to be a major source of frustration for residents. The Association regularly receives complaints from tenants and owners about items being left outside and lying for significant periods of time before they are taken away.

Glasgow City Council is the responsible authority for bulk waste removal. There is a straight forward procedure for requesting uplifts, either by phoning **0141 287 9700** or through the Council's website [www.glasgow.gov.uk](http://www.glasgow.gov.uk)

Currently, the time between reporting and removal can be up to 28 days.

Only items that have been reported will be collected, so it often happens that items are left behind by the cleansing department because they have simply been added



to the original pile. This adds to the frustration and is easily avoided, by making sure anything that is left out for collection is reported to the council.

## What do Yorkhill HA do to help manage this?

Yorkhill Housing Association staff carry out regular inspections of backcourt areas, normally each property is inspected every three weeks. Bulk items are noted and checks made with the Cleansing Department to confirm the items have been reported or request their

uplift if they have not. If the collection request has not been made, the 28 day waiting period starts when the Association contacts the depot.

## What can you as a resident or private landlord do to assist?

The easiest way to minimise the time the items are outside is to make the call.

## Are there any other bulk waste methods that could be used?

During 2019 the Association will be consulting residents on alternative ways of having bulk items removed. We will look at systems used by other social landlords and compare effectiveness. However, it is extremely likely that a more efficient method will have a cost implication that would be passed on to all residents.

## Factoring Invoices

**Invoices for the period 16<sup>th</sup> May to 15<sup>th</sup> November were issued recently. As always prompt payment is much appreciated and helps to keep costs down.**

Owners have a number of payment options including: by Allpay cards in local outlets, internet banking, cheques by post, direct debit or standing order. During office hours we accept debit card payments. We also accept credit cards for payments over £500.

This is not a great time of year to be receiving bills, but there is a little good news with the invoices. The Association's application earlier this year to HMRC for VAT de-registration was successful, which means we no longer require to charge VAT on our management fees. We will of course still require to pay VAT to our registered contractors and suppliers, and will continue to recharge these costs as appropriate.



# Staff News Update

**It's been a busy year for staff changes. We've had retirements, maternity leave and new starts.**

## Goodbye to...

We said a sad farewell to two of our longest serving members of staff when Rhona Gallacher, our Senior Housing Officer, retired in August and was followed the following month by Margaret Gillespie our Finance Manager. Both Rhona and



Rhona Gallacher



Margaret's retirement

Margaret joined the Association back in the early eighties and were very much involved in the comprehensive tenement rehabilitation programme. There are still a few longer term tenants that will remember these days, but most will probably find it difficult to imagine homes without bath or shower rooms, running hot water or central heating. Yorkhill Housing Association has come a long way since then. Over the years, Rhona and Margaret each made very different but equally important contributions to the organisation. Rhona was directly involved with the tenants on day to day tenancy issues, while Margaret's role was more behind the scenes as she made sure the Association's finances stayed in a healthy position, sometimes in very difficult circumstances.

We will miss them both but hope they both enjoy their well-deserved retirements.

We also said a temporary 'au revoir' to Linsey Caldwell, our Governance Assistant who is on maternity leave. Linsey gave birth to a lovely girl in August, a wee sister for Euan.



Linsey Caldwell



Aileen Brown

Linsey will be enjoying precious family time until her return in August 2019.

Aileen Brown is covering Linsey's maternity leave and is with us for a year.

## Welcome to...



Gary Watson was appointed in August as our new Finance Manager.

Gary has several years of RSL Finance experience and is settling well into his new position.



Also in August, Anne Marinelli joined us to take up the new position of Factoring Officer. Anne has previously worked in Factoring and Housing Management roles and will already be familiar to some residents as she carries out her weekly estate management inspections.



Our most recent appointment was Paul Ferns who successfully applied for the Property Services Assistant post. Paul also has previous RSL experience and is a welcome addition to the busy property services team arranging reactive, planned and major repairs across all properties.





## Office Closure Dates

The office will be closed from 1pm on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2018. We re-open at 9am on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019

## Emergency Repair Contact Details

For use only when the Association's office is closed. During normal business hours all repairs should be reported through the office: 0141 285 7910.

Heating, hot water and gas: Alba Gas 0771 737 7352

All other emergency repairs – Totalis on 0141 889 0089

**46 Overnewton Street only** – Heating, Hot water and gas repairs

ECG – 07817 482 637 or 07817 614 337 or 01698 828 778

**IF YOU SMELL GAS OR SUSPECT A LEAK AT ANY TIME  
CONTACT SCOTIA GAS NETWORKS -  
0800 111 999 IMMEDIATELY.**

## Contact us

[www.yorkhillha.org](http://www.yorkhillha.org),  
0141 285 7910,  
[administration@yorkhillha.org](mailto:administration@yorkhillha.org)



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