

Yorkhill News

housing association ltd

WINTER 2022

The Newsletter of Yorkhill Housing Association Ltd



Merry



Christmas

and a Happy New Year!

from the staff and committee at Yorkhill Housing Association

Helene Fitzgerald

The Management Committee and Staff were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Helene Fitzgerald on 29th August. Helene was the longest serving tenant member, having joined the committee in 1990 shortly after moving to the area. She was the Chairperson for over twenty years and was serving as Treasurer at the time of her death.

Helene was passionate about tenants having a say in their homes, and very proud of the local services provided to residents. Never afraid to speak her mind, she was a staunch supporter of small community-based organisations and spoke on their behalf at many external events. Unfortunately, in recent years her activities were

restricted as her health failed. Her spirit remained strong until the end and her sudden passing came as a shock.

Yorkhill Housing Association has lost a friend and an invaluable business resource. Her breadth of knowledge and particular interest in Finance will be missed for a long time. Everyone at YHA extends their condolences to Brendan, Niall, Shona and Cathy.



2022 Annual General Meeting



The Association's 2022 AGM was held on 22nd September in the Overnewton Centre.

Scott Wilson of Azets Accountants presented the 2021-22 annual accounts confirming the Association was in a healthy financial position and able to meet its long term financial and business obligations. Azets were appointed as external auditors for the financial year 2022-23.

The Management Committee was delighted to welcome five new members for the current session.

Brendan Hanley, Niall Fitzgerald, and James Wilson were elected at the AGM. Mic Ralph and Michael Chang were subsequently co-opted.

Unfortunately, Secretary Bob Winning had to step down for health reasons. He will be missed by staff and committee and we all hope he will return in the future. Bob's calm manner and genuine tenant perspective made him an invaluable contributor to the Association's business discussions throughout the seven years he served on the Management Committee.

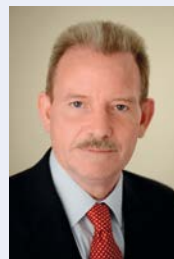
The Management Committee members for 2022-23 are:



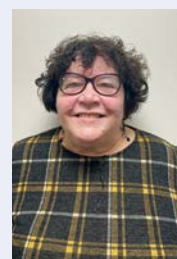
Dr Malcolm Green
Chairperson



Colin Armstrong
Vice Chair



Billy Kennedy
Secretary



Yvonne Alexis
Treasurer

Neil McPherson
Gurmeet Mattu
Paul Marsden
Brendan Hanley
Niall Fitzgerald

James Wilson
Cllr Phillip Braat co-opted
Mic Ralph co-opted
Michael Chang co-opted

We Want to hear From You

We are always looking to hear from our customers. We would like to know what you think about our services, how we provide them, and how we should improve.

The Association will be reviewing its customer consultation procedures over the next few months and we are looking for our residents to get involved.

We are looking for lots of different ways to improve our communication with tenants, so if you have a suggestion we would like to hear it!

Recognising Good Neighbours!



Has a neighbour been really helpful to you over the COVID pandemic? Does someone always check you are okay? Do they always stop to say hello? Does someone go the extra mile for you?

For whatever reason if you feel one of your neighbours deserves recognition we want to help celebrate them and their good efforts!

If you know someone in the local area who deserves recognition please get in touch! We'd like to hear about how they have helped and we would be delighted to give an award to help celebrate!

Please email administration@yorkhillha.org or call 0141 258 7910 with your story.

Practical Support to keep your home warm

Are you struggling to keep your home warm? Are you worried about your bills this winter? Do you want to reduce your energy use?

We may be able to help!

We have received some grant funding to provide practical support options to eligible tenants. These can help you pay for, or reduce, your energy use, and to get the best out of your heating system. We also can supply some energy saving equipment – and its FREE! Contact the Housing Management team for more information.



If you would be interested in attending any feedback groups, helping to set new policies, or if you would be interested in scrutinising our work in more detail please get in touch with our Housing Services Manager, Grant Kennedy, on 0141 285 7910, or by email at administration@yorkhillha.org.

Allocations Policy

The Association is reviewing its Allocations Policy and would like to hear your views!

We will be changing the points structure and categories, and this will affect how we allocate empty properties. Our policy should meet the needs of our tenants and customers, while

also covering some legal and regulatory requirements. We hope this new policy will be in place by the end of March.

The Housing Management Team will be creating a Focus Group to invite anyone interested to come along and learn more about our current policy, and help shape the new one. If you would like to be involved in these meetings

please contact Grant Kennedy, Housing Services Manager, on 0141 285 7910 or email at administration@yorkhillha.org.

If you think you could not make the Focus Group meetings but would still like to be involved, or if you would prefer to give us your thoughts on the Allocations Policy in another way, please still get in touch.

Property Services

Reactive Repairs

Our reactive repair service is operating normally with the undernoted target response times:

- **Emergency:** made safe within 4 hours
- **Urgent:** completed within 2 working days
- **Routine:** completed within 3 working days

During 2021-22, our average completion times were:

- **Emergency** 1.7 hours
- **Urgent** 1.6 days
- **Routine** 2.2 days

During the pandemic many of our planned contracts were put on hold as work had to be restricted to low risk outdoor contracts. As restrictions were gradually lifted we started to resume cyclical, planned and investment works. Our plans for 2023 will continue with the catch-up programme.

Major Works

We were less restricted with our external Major works during the pandemic and were able to progress and complete a number of repairs to the fabric of some of our properties. Two of the biggest external rendering & pointing jobs in the area in recent times at Old Dumbarton Rd & Sauchiehall St were completed.

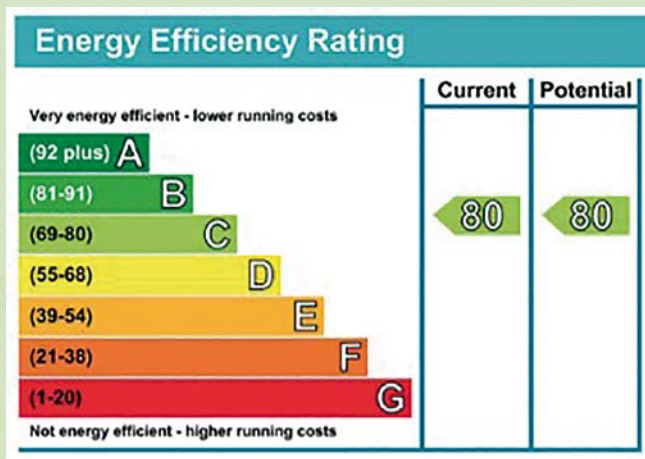
We've had scaffolds up all around the area for various works such as repairs to stone lintels, external render and pointing works and gutter renewals and repairs.



Energy Performance Certification

Our energy performance certifier Lenlay Energy Consultants Ltd. will be in touch with tenants whose current Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is over 10 years old to update them.

We again ask for your assistance in ensuring the contractor is given access to your home to carry out this valuable service as we continue toward meeting the Governments Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) target.



Property Services

Planned/Cyclical Works

Many of our cyclical maintenance programmes are undertaken without the need for direct contact with residents or access to homes. Obvious examples include landscaping, roof anchor safety checks, and gutter cleaning.

Where access is essential for safety and/or legal purposes, the Association will do its best to accommodate any special requirements residents may have to allow the work to be undertaken. We use our Force Access policy as a last resort. Examples of essential cyclical

work include gas safety checks and audits, electrical periodic inspections and enhanced fire protection system installations.

Next year the Close Painting Programme will be comprehensively reviewed to group more adjoining properties together.

There are six closes in Old Dumbarton Road programmed for painting during January – March 2023, subject to required owners' consents. Owners' meetings have recently been arranged.

Investment Programme

During 2021-22 we achieved a total spend of just under £150,000 on upgrades.

We completed:

14 kitchens, 27 new boiler installations, 7 bathroom adaptations and 7 bathroom upgrades.

Our programme for 2022-23 is ongoing, planned upgrades include 10 kitchens and bathrooms and 25 boilers. Adaptation requests will be progressed as received.

There are also three overdue window replacement projects that we hope to be able to complete during 2023-24.

Consultants have been appointed to manage each of these. We hope to achieve a site start for 46 Overnewton Street before the end of March 2023.

Updated Planning Consent applications have been submitted to GCC for the properties at 1301-1317 Argyle Street and 1189 – 1263 Argyle Street.

These contracts will be slotted into our investment programme when consents have been received. We will keep residents informed of progress.



Tenancy Support

You may have already met the Association's Tenancy Services Assistant, Cat MacKenzie. Cat will be contacting every one of our tenants over the course of the year to identify any support or assistance requirements that you might have.

Cat can help by making referrals to support agencies, liaising with Social Work or the NHS on

your behalf, or by arranging food parcels if you are struggling.

There is also practical assistance available too. If you need any adaptations to your home Cat can help you start the process of applying to Social Work for help.

If you need any other help to stay in your home please get in touch at the Association's office on 0141 285 7910.



Are you struggling with money?

With the cost of living increasing, gas and electric bills going up, petrol being more expensive you might find your money doesn't stretch as far.

The Association might be able to help!

Welfare Rights Officer

Our new Welfare Rights Officer, Claire Findlay, started with us in October. Claire is based in the Association's office on Wednesdays. If you would like an appointment to discuss any benefits issues please get in touch.



Drumchapel Money Advice

We also have a partnership with Drumchapel Money Advice where our tenants can receive free, impartial, advice on a range of issues including; income maximisation, benefit claims and appeals, debt advice and much more. DMAC have helped our tenants receive over £50,000 of income last year, and help with managing debts and budgeting too.

*Drumchapel
Money Advice
Centre*

If you would like any advice on budgeting, or help with debt, please get in touch with the office and we can make a referral.

Factoring

Removal of Bulk Items from Backcourts

During 2021-22 the Association introduced a bulk uplift service following consultation with owners.

In early 2021, several local backcourts were in a dangerous and unsafe position with excessive bulk items restricting access to bin-stores and causing problems with vermin and fire risks. This had come about as a result of Glasgow City Council replacing the previously free regular uplift service with a charging system that was impractical and

unmanageable for tenement properties.

There are 67 backcourts within the Association's managed stock. Each serves between 6 and 78 households, depending on the location.

The Association consulted all owners seeking their views on options for resolving the problem. A majority of owners from 52 properties, including YHA, voted for the Association to arrange an uplift service.

During 2021-22 YHA arranged 172 uplifts. The total cost was just under £9,000 and owners' shares were recharged in the twice-yearly invoices.

Between April 1st and September 30th this year, 121 uplifts were arranged costing £6434.

Keeping the backcourts clear and tidy makes a huge difference to the environment, and we very much appreciate the time and work dedicated to this by some residents.



Factoring Invoices

Invoices have recently been issued to all owners covering charges for the period 15th May to 15th November.

There are several options for making payment which include: Allpay at local outlets, Debit card by phone to office, Cheque, Standing Order, Direct Debit or Bank Transfer.

For information on any of these options or to discuss payment arrangements please contact our Factoring Manager Jaqueline Stirling at the office. 0141 285 7910

Please remember our Money and Benefits Advice Services are free, confidential and available to all residents. If you are struggling to pay your bills and think these services could be helpful, you can arrange an appointment through our office. Home visits can be arranged for housebound residents.

Close Painting Consultation

Owners' meetings were recently arranged to discuss close painting plans and costs for 49-63 and 94-104 Old Dumbarton Road.

Subject to majority owners' agreements, the contracts are planned to start prior to the end of the financial year.



Tenant Safety

The safety of our tenants is of paramount importance to us. We have a number of policies and procedures to ensure that our properties are maintained safely in line with all relevant legislation and regulations. All tenants have a responsibility to work with the landlord in arranging safety work or inspections.

Gas Safety

It is critically important that we get access each year to all of our properties that have gas, to allow the necessary checks and maintenance to take place. Around 30 people are killed in the UK each year as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning caused by gas appliances that have not been serviced.

Our contractor, Alba Gas Ltd, will visit your home to check and service our gas appliances. You will be contacted via letter by Alba Gas to give you notice of their planned visit, If for any reason the first appointment does not suit simply call Alba Gas or our Office to re-schedule. We will do our best to arrange a day and time that suits you

Your Annual Gas Safety Visit should take no more than 30 minutes. If you have a query about

arranging access, you should contact our Office on 0141 285 7910 or Alba Gas on 0141 445 4422.



Enhanced Smoke Alarm Systems

To comply with updated legislation, the Association has installed interlinked smoke and heat alarms in most tenants' homes; as well as carbon monoxide detectors where there are gas appliances. It is important that these are tested regularly. You should test your alarms once every week to ensure that they are in working order. If there are any problems with your detectors, you should contact the Association right away to have them attended to.

If you have not had your interlinked alarms installed yet, please contact the Association immediately to have this done. It is a condition of tenancy that you allow access to have essential safety work undertaken.

Legionella control

To reduce the risk of Legionella disease tenants should:

- Clean shower heads, descale and disinfect them at least every two months.
- For showers that are only used occasionally, flush the shower through by running water for at least two minutes once a week.
- If your property is vacant for any time (for example, when on holiday), flush both hot and cold-water systems by running all outlets for at least two minutes.
- Notify the Association promptly of there are problems with debris or discoloration in the water.



Using Video Recording Equipment Responsibly

More and more people are using ring door bells and other security recording devices to help protect their homes. The Association does not become involved with individual installations that do not disturb the structural fabric of the property but we do strongly recommend that residents fully comply with the law to avoid potential legal disputes.

If you are considering installing or already use video recording equipment in your home, you must think about data protection and privacy.

If you configure the equipment so it only captures images within the curtilage of your property and sound recording is disabled, then you are exempt from complying with data protection law.

But if it captures images of individuals outside that area, including shared spaces (such as common closes or the back court area), or records sound (even sounds inside the curtilage) then your use of the equipment must comply with data protection law. You will be regarded as a "controller" and will need to comply with data protection law when using it. This means that individuals who are concerned about your use of video recording equipment could ask for access to images, footage containing their images and sound recordings and make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) about you. You would also need to put appropriate signage in place.

The ICO can issue fines against those who abuse individuals' rights. In a recent case, an individual was awarded compensation by the court against a neighbour who did not use video recording equipment in accordance with data protection law. See: [https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10085561/A-victory-privacy-Woman-100k-damages-neighbours-](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10085561/A-victory-privacy-Woman-100k-damages-neighbours-doorbell-cameras.html)

[doorbell-cameras.html](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10085561/A-victory-privacy-Woman-100k-damages-neighbours-doorbell-cameras.html)

We recommend you use video recording equipment responsibly in a way that respects the privacy of others. Think about what areas you feel you need to cover, how you can position the equipment to avoid intruding on your neighbours' property or any shared or public spaces and disable any sound recording facilities, where available.

If you feel you need to capture images beyond your property, you will then need to have clear and justifiable reasons for doing so, write them down and comply with data protection law by:

- Letting individuals know you are using video recording equipment by putting up signs saying that recording is taking place and why.
- Not capturing more footage than you need to achieve your purpose in using it.
- Ensuring the security of the footage you capture by holding it securely and making sure nobody else can watch it without good reason.
- Only keeping the footage for as long as you need it by deleting it regularly.
- Ensuring the equipment is not misused by other members of your household.
- Respecting the rights of the individuals whose images you capture. This includes not sharing footage with others and / or posting it to social media.

If we receive complaints about your use of video recording equipment, we will direct any complainers to the Police and / or the ICO. We will also recommend complainers seek independent legal advice about their rights. We will not be involved in complaints, as this is a matter between you and the complainers.

Engaging with our Customers

Rent Consultation for 2023

You may have seen some reports of a rent freeze being made law by the Scottish Government. This freeze is initially only until 31st March 2023 but could be extended – our rents usually increase from 1st April each year so this freeze may not affect your rent.

The Government will announce by January if the rent for 2023/24 should be frozen or capped. Until this is announced the Scottish Housing Regulator has said we should plan as normal.

We recognise that everyone's bills have went up. This has affected the Association too with our contracts and expenses also increasing. We will work hard to ensure that we can keep your rent as low as possible, but we will need to make sure that we have enough money to pay for the services that we provide in order to keep everyone's homes in good condition.

Our rent consultation letter was sent to all tenants recently. The letter included information on YHA's rents compared to neighbouring association and future expenditure commitments. It also explained that the Management Committee was proposing a below-inflation increase of 6% . The majority of tenants who responded supported the proposal,

but due to the postal strikes a number of tenants did not receive the letter in time to respond.

The Management Committee has agreed to issue a further letter to tenants in January, once the Scottish Government has clarified its position in relation to social landlord rent increases.

Survey Prize Draw Winners

Each year the Association's Housing Management Team asks our tenants their opinion on a variety of topics, including our annual rent increase, and their satisfaction with our services.

Anyone returning these surveys is entered into a prize draw, with 6 winning a £30 shopping voucher!

The winners this year were:

- Mr Reid, Gilbert Street
- Mr Mohammed, Regent Moray Street
- Mrs Malki, Argyle Street
- Ms Williams, Overnewton Street
- Ms Black, Overnewton Street
- Mr Keaveney, Regent Moray Street

Congratulations again to our winners!

Have your say

The Association will be undertaking its three yearly 'Residents Survey' early in 2023. The procurement exercise for the commissioning of an independent consultant to do this will be underway shortly. The consultant appointed will contact residents directly to request your participation. When you are contacted, please help us to help you by taking part in the survey. Though this survey, let us know what you think about the service you receive; and what you'd like to see happening in your community.

Staff News

We have recently welcomed two new members of staff on our team.

Jaqueline Stirling

Our new Factoring Manager Jacqueline Stirling brings 20 years' factoring experience with her, having previously worked for two other housing associations.



Jaqueline is a corporate member of the IRPM and also provides factoring training for other organisations.

Michelle Muirhead

Michelle is our new Senior Property Services Assistant with 8 years' experience, also from two other housing associations.



Michelle is currently working towards an HNC in Building and Construction.

On a sadder note, it's time to say 'Goodbye' to our longest serving member of staff as she retires following 43 years of service.

Pauline Hollinsworth

Pauline Hollinsworth joined the Association in 1980 as the organisation's Admin Typist.

No computers, mobile phones or internet back then and the office was a room and kitchen flat in Regent Moray Street. All of the properties were unimproved; no running hot water, few bathrooms, no central heating and no fitted kitchens. Very, very different to social housing standards now.

Pauline has always been a hard working person committed to giving her best and more to everything that was asked of her. She has held various roles throughout the years, from Maintenance Assistant to Housing Officer to Factoring Manager and more recently the dual role of Director of Property Services /Deputy Chief Executive.

Whatever her title has been, her strong work ethic and high levels of integrity have remained consistent as have her apparently

inexhaustible supplies of energy. She is an inspiring role model for younger people setting out on a career in social housing.

Pauline's skills, experience and dark sense of humour will be missed by everyone at YHA but we wish her well as she leaves us to travel, spend more time with her grandchildren and continue her long time voluntary work with Scouting.

YHA's Chairperson Malcolm Green paid the following tribute: *"Her 43 years' dedicated service to Yorkhill, latterly in charge of our large factoring operation, have combined a unique ability to secure value for money with consistently high levels of customer satisfaction. We shall miss her greatly but wish her well in a fully deserved retirement."*



IMPORTANT COLD WEATHER ADVICE

With fuel costs higher than ever there couldn't be a worse time to have the coldest weather in years. The risk of burst pipes is much higher if a property is unheated, and the resultant damage will cost more than money to put right. Following the advice below will help to reduce your risk of a burst pipe or minimise damage.

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 low.

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.

If you have a frozen pipe:

- 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.**

If you are unlucky and have a burst:

- 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 below.

Remember in severe weather the plumber may be responding to several calls - they will attend as soon as possible. Do not call out more than one plumber - you may be recharged for abortive call-outs.

Office Closure

The Association's office will close for the Christmas break at 1pm on 23rd December 2022 and reopen at 9am on 5th January 2023.

Emergency Repair Contractors during this period are:

Heating, hot water and gas repairs
- Alba Gas -
0771 737 7352

All other emergency repairs -
Totalis on 0141 889 0089

Heating, Hot water and gas repairs at Overnewton Court
Only:

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

These numbers are for use when the Association's office is closed.

During normal business hours all repairs should be reported through the office: 0141 285 7910.

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

Contact us

www.yorkhillha.org,
0141 285 7910,
administration@yorkhillha.org

 Find us on
Facebook
/Yorkhill Housing Association

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Scottish Housing Regulator 209 • Scottish Registered Charity SC0403346
Financial Conduct Authority 2302 RS • Property Factors Register PF000220