



The Forth Estate

Issue 29

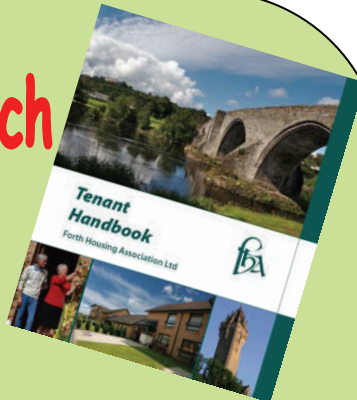
Dec 2007

Tenant Handbook Launch

We are pleased to announce that the new Tenant Handbook has recently been completed. All existing tenants are being hand delivered a copy during the month of December.

It has been designed to allow any amendments to be made easily. We will regularly review the content and send you replacement pages or sections, when things change.

Therefore, please keep your new Handbook in a safe place and use the amendments we send you, to keep it up to date.



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Mrs Petrie and Mrs Reid

The Handbook provides an outline of our services, as well as useful telephone numbers.

We are able to provide more information on many of these services.

Our Chairperson, Gordon Mason, was delighted to present a bouquet of flowers to 2 of our tenants from 'Have your voice heard', who helped to develop the Handbook, from inception to completion. He said " This is wonderful participation when tenants can see their ideas develop and come to

fruition."

Angela Laley from Forth said

"A special thank-you is due on behalf of Forth to Mrs Reid and Mrs Petrie, who gave not only their time but moreover their ideas and feedback. It is this effort that has made the Handbook user friendly and hopefully, able to be used by all our tenants for many years to come."



Gordon Mason and Angela Laley presenting bouquet of flowers to Mrs Reid and Mrs Petrie.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

To Patrick Kaney for winning the £25 voucher for returning his 'Points of View' card during April-June 2007.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

To Yvonne Burdett for winning the £25 voucher for returning her 'Points of View' card during July-September 2007.

Dates for your Diary

Dec/Jan 08 Bank Holidays

Please note that Forth's offices will be closed from:

4 p.m. on Monday 24th December until 9am Thursday 3rd January 2008



Christmas is coming...

....but you still need to pay your rent! We all know that Christmas can be an expensive time of year, however you need to budget to ensure that you can pay your bills and prevent starting 2008 in debt.

A New Year is all about starting afresh and making resolutions, the Housing Officers do not wish to first foot tenants in 2008 regarding rent arrears or to instigate legal action.

If you are going away over the festive period, remember to take your payment card with you, whether you are going to Dundee or Dumfries, you can still make your rent payments with your payment card, you can pay at any Post Office, or outlet displaying the following logos:



If however you do have any problems paying your rent please contact your Housing Officer immediately to advise and to make a repayment arrangement with them.

Update - Website Development

We are pleased to announce that the website is nearing completion. We are in the process of testing systems. It is anticipated that the formal launch will be in January 2008. Therefore, the website address will be publicised in the near future.

The website will hold a host of useful information regarding the Association. It will enable users to report a repair, estate management or anti-social issue, apply for housing (including transfer applications), and pay rent through allpay.net. It will also include information on existing and new build developments. All existing services will continue to be provided by the association using our normal procedures, and the website will be in addition to these services.

Should you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Angela Laley, Housing Officer, Tel No (01786) 446066.

Money Advice

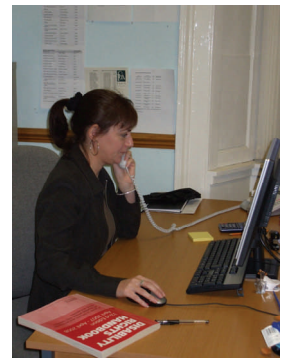
Project

We are delighted to announce that Tracy Doran has joined our staff.

Tracy is a Money Advisor and will be able to provide advice in the office or in your home, on the following areas:

- ◆ Maximising your income, by claiming all benefits.
- ◆ Basic debt counseling.
- ◆ Information in relation to sources of affordable credit and household contents insurance.
- ◆ Budgeting skills.

Please contact the office for more information



REPAIRS AT CHRISTMAS

What to do if you have a problem.

During the Festive period the Emergency Repairs service at Stirling Council Housing Services will operate with a skeleton staff who will only respond to emergency and urgent repair requests.

		EMERGENCY NUMBERS
Gas leak:	<i>Turn your gas supply off at the meter and open windows.</i>	Gas Maintenance PME 01506 449394 or TRANSCO 0800 111 999
No cold water supply:	Check that the stop cock at your mains supply is turned on. Check with neighbours to see if they have a supply of cold water. If they do not, contact Scottish Water on 0845 601 8855 . If it is only your home that is effected contact the Repairs service.	Scottish Water 0845 601 8855 or Repairs Service 07715 004 265
No electricity:	If you have a Power Card and there is credit in the meter or if your neighbours are also affected then contact Scottish Power — In severe weather conditions a power line could be down. Check your Consumer Unit which is normally in the hall or hall cupboard. If any of the 'trip switches' are down, something has probably caused it to "trip" - If a bulb has blown, replace it and reset the trip switch. If the problem is with the sockets the power circuit may have "tripped" because an appliance is faulty or the circuit is overloaded. Switch off all sockets and unplug all appliances. Reset the trip switch in the consumer unit, then plug in and switch on one appliance at a time. If the circuit trips again then the appliance is faulty. Do not use it.	Scottish Power 0845 2727 999 Repairs Service 07715 004 265
Broken windows:	This will normally be boarded up/made safe for attention after the Christmas holidays.	Repairs Service 07715 004 265
Security/Access to the Property:	Tenants are reminded that they are liable for any works carried out on their behalf due to them losing keys or keys being broken in the lock. The contractor will gain access to the property and change the lock. <u>Please note:</u> close doors which do not lock are NOT considered an Emergency repair.	Repairs Service 07715 004 265
Blocked waste pipes:	(Sink, bath, Wash-hand basin ,or shower) These too are <i>rechargeable repairs</i> . You will be recharged any costs incurred should you call out the Repairs service. Again most choked waste pipes within the property can be cleared using a plunger.	Repairs Service 07715 004 265
Choked WC:	<i>This is considered to be a rechargeable repair</i> Should you contact the Repairs Service you will be recharged any costs incurred. Normally a choked WC can be cleared by using a plunger which can be bought at most "Pound" stores for very little cost.	Repairs Service 07715 004 265
Urgent Repairs:	These should be attended to by the contractor within two days of notification. These are considered repairs which are necessary <i>to prevent a serious loss of facility, or where delay is likely to cause serious delay deterioration to the property or inconvenience to the occupier</i>	

Please refer to your Tenant Handbook for further details and if you are in any doubt about a repair please telephone 07715 004 265 who will help you.

PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM FROST

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

- ◆ Leave doors in each room open to allow a flow of warm air throughout your home
 - ◆ Set your room thermostat to a minimum of 10 C
- ◆ If you are going to leave your home for a long time, turn off the water at the main stop cock valve and drain off both the hot and cold water systems and advise Forth Housing Association.
- ◆ If you have a wet central heating system **do not** drain this down. Instead set the timer to come on early in the morning and evening for an hour or so, and set your radiators at the lowest setting.

If you do have burst or frozen pipes please carry out the following

- ◆ Turn off the water at the main stop cock and turn on all cold taps.
- ◆ Save water in the bath for flushing the toilet and for the kettle to make hot drinks
- ◆ Switch off any electrical appliances which may come into contact with flooding water.

Contact the Emergency Repairs Service on 07715 004 265

Estate Management



With the help of a group of Tenants, the Estate Management Policy was recently reviewed. We would like to take this opportunity to thank those tenants for giving up their valuable time and giving their comments on this subject.

As a result of this tenant consultation it was agreed that estate management visits would be carried out on a fortnightly rotation instead of monthly. The proposed dates that estate management visits will be carried out by the Housing Officer's over the next 3 months are:

Elaine Shepherd		Isabel Reilly
Raploch, Fallin, Cambusbarron, Riverside City Centre: King St Crosbies Court / Myles House / Cowane St		St Ninians, Whins of Milton, Bannockburn, Plean and Cowie City Centre, Braehead and Cornton
(week beginning)		(week beginning)
-		03.12.07
10.12.07		17.12.07
07.01.08		14.01.08
21.01.08		28.01.08
04.02.08		11.02.08
18.02.08		25.02.08
03.03.08		10.03.08
17.03.08	24.03.08	
31.03.08	07.04.08	

Calling All Pet Lovers!



You may remember earlier this year we asked tenants for their views on our Pets Policy as it was due to be reviewed. We would like to take this opportunity to thank tenants who gave up their valuable time to attend meetings and those who gave their comments on this subject.

The outcome of this review is that some tenants' rights have been enhanced, you will now be allowed to keep a small/medium dog in a flat, however in general, tenants will be permitted to keep, with written permission, the following type of animals as Pets:



- Cat
- Guinea pig

- Dog
- Rat



- Bird
- Hamster
- Rabbit
- Fish



The number of pets you will be allowed to keep will however be restricted. If you wish to keep a pet please discuss this with your Housing Officer prior to taking ownership of the pet to ensure that you comply with conditions of the Pets Policy.

If however you currently have a pet without permission please contact your Housing Officer to apply for written permission.

Elaine Shepherd, Housing Officer
01786 431 927
elaine@forthha.org.uk

Isabel Reilly, Housing Officer
01786 431 926
isabel@forthha.org.uk

ANNUAL RENT INCREASE

As in previous years, you will be given two months notice of the proposed percentage increase. This will be circulated to all tenants and sharing owners at the end of January 2008.

You will thereafter receive personal notification of your increased rent amount by 28th February 2008.

The Great Wheelie Bin Debate

Wheelie bins, green ones, grey ones, brown ones, little blue boxes for recycling, where will it all end!

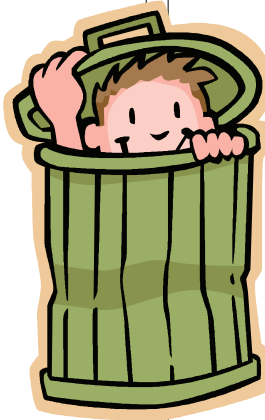
We all know why we have all these different coloured bins, but do we know how we are supposed to fill them up? Of course we do, we're not stupid. Ah, but do we know how we are supposed to deliver them to the street to be emptied?

Well, apparently, our bins won't be uplifted if the lid doesn't close. Some people might think this is a bit much as the bins are only emptied on a fortnightly basis. Well, I can now tell you all why.

Stirling Council spent a lot of money upgrading their bin lorries to the new and fabulous ones we see on our streets.

They empty our bins two at a time, as there's a great big arm thing that shoots out from the side of the lorry which lifts up our bins.

If the lid of our bins is not in the closed position, this big arm thing can't lift the bin! Seems crazy you might say, but give a thought for the poor bin men who used to have to manually lift our bins to be emptied into the back of the old type bin lorries, sometimes getting covered in other peoples rubbish and, at the same time doing injury to their backs! All these new rules mean that, from a health and safety point of view, the bin men will be a great deal healthier (I sure wouldn't have wanted to do their job the old way!). So, come on all you people out there, let's get things right.



When putting your bins out for collection, make sure they are not overloaded, and that the lids close properly. If you have loads of rubbish and the bin isn't big enough to cope, Stirling Council sent every householder in the Stirling area a card for entry to the local landfill site, so that we could take any extra rubbish (or anything else for disposal) there ourselves. I can hear you all now, "what if we don't have transport?" Don't worry about that, just phone the Council and they will arrange for a special uplift, which I'm sorry to say, if you're not one of our senior citizens, you will have to pay for this service.

Housing Management Team

Forth Staff Run the New York Marathon

We are delighted to announce that both Caroline Stevenson and Angela Laley from Forth completed the New York Marathon on 4 November, 2007. This race is a gruelling 26.2 miles.

Both were part of a team of 10 runners from the Stirling Area, called The Blisster Sisters, running the marathon to raise money for BLISS (a charity for premature and sick babies). So far, the group have raised nearly £10,000. Caroline said "this was one of the most difficult but rewarding challenges that I have completed".

