



FORTH
housing association Ltd.

SpeakingForth

The newsletter of Forth Housing Association Ltd

Summer 2016

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Forth's Performance Passes Targets!

Last year saw Forth's performance improve in almost every area of our work and our targets were smashed across the board.

Forth aims to provide quality affordable homes and services and our performance results show that we're doing better than ever before. Despite the economic climate we are able to

develop more homes than planned, with extra Government grant allowing us to start work on 23 new homes in Cultenhove.

When it came to letting our homes to people in need we managed to do this effectively and lost only £685 through homes lying empty. Despite the introduction of Universal Credit we actually managed to end the year with lower rent arrears than we started.

The average time taken to deal with emergency repairs was 2 hours and the average for our non-emergency repair work was just over 5 days. We undertook almost 2400 individual repairs and 98% of these were completed right first time.

Planned improvements to homes were completed on time and in budget, complaints were responded to within timescales and satisfaction levels are encouragingly high. We'll not get complacent but it is always good to reflect on a "job well done" and now we'll move on to this year with an aim to repeat or improve further.



Garden Competition - Your Chance to Nominate Your Neighbour!

Just a reminder that our annual garden competition is being held and a guest judge will choose the winning gardens over the Summer period.

If you have a neighbour you would like to nominate for having a beautiful garden, please telephone our office or e mail angela@forthha.org.uk. Just give your neighbours name and address that you are nominating for the garden competition.

This year there are 3 categories: £40 for best garden, £25 for best basket/pot display and £50 for best scheme. We can't tell you the exact date of the judging, ... that would be cheating. However, the winners will be announced in our Autumn Newsletter together with photos of the winning gardens. Happy gardening and good luck!!



Photo Competition Winners

The competition to supply photos for our Calendar/Annual Report, announced in the last newsletter, generated high quality submissions. The judging was carried out by a number of our Management Committee members and we're pleased to announce that prizes were issued to the following:

S Crombie, K Figliolini, A Martin, V Martin and T Wilson.

Some of the winning photos are shown here but you'll need to await the distribution of the calendar in September to see the full results.



Don't Miss Out, Fill It Out!



The number of tenants completing and returning satisfaction questionnaires has decreased over the past year. This means we're missing out on peoples' views and opinions. More importantly it means people are missing out on the chance to win prizes. Please take the time to give us your views and you could be better off for doing so. Your feedback will help us improve our services to you!

Survey Winners – Your Feedback Is Vital!

Well done to Hugh Carroll from Raploch, and Christopher Burrow, from Plean who each won £25 in supermarket vouchers after returning a

Maintenance Points of View Card and for answering questions in our Gas Service and Repair Survey.

Joint Tenants Satisfaction Survey Update

As reported in our last issue our satisfaction survey has been carried out by Research Resource and they called on approximately one third of our tenants to get your views. We will report back on the results in future issues when the winners of the prizes for taking part, will also be announced.

Have We Got Your Latest Details?

Have we got your current e mail address, landline and/or mobile phone number? These tend to change regularly and it is all too easy to forget to let your contacts know. It is important for us to have this information in case we require to contact you in an emergency. Please advise Margaret Glencross or Ann Gorden at the office, if you have had a recent change.

Money News Round-up!

Our Income Maximisation Officer, Tracy Doran is here to help you. So contact Tracy at the office if you have any questions or would like assistance with completion of forms. Tracy can undertake a home visit at a time that suits you. Tracy can be contacted at Direct Dial Tel: 01786 431921 or e mail tracy@forthha.org.uk.

Clothing Grant (children from Primary 1 to age 16 before 30th September 16)

- Parents on Income Support, Employment Support Allowance income based or Jobseekers Allowance income based
- Parents in receipt of Child Tax Credits but not Working Tax Credits and less than £16,105 annual income
- Parents in receipt of Child Tax Credits and Working Tax Credits and less than £16,105 annual income

Applications for clothing grant MUST be made by 31.12.16

Free School Meals (school age children)

- Parents on Income Support, Employment Support Allowance income based or Jobseekers Allowance income based
- Parents in receipt of Child Tax Credits but not Working Tax Credits and less than £16,105 annual income
- Parents in receipt of Child Tax Credits and Working Tax Credits and less than £6,420 annual income

Forms for both Clothing Grant and free School Meals available from Stirling Council
Tel: 0845 277 7000.

Child Benefit

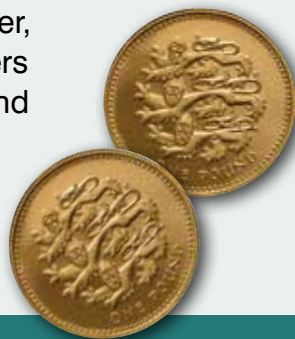
When your child is 16 years old and leaves school Child Benefit will normally stop. However, in some circumstances Child Benefit can be extended. eg if your child is aged 16 and under 20 and on an approved training course. Or if your child is aged 16 or 17 and has left education or training and is registered for work with the Careers Service and is not working for 24 hours or more.



18 years old and No Longer In Education or Unemployed

When your child turns 18 and is no longer in education or is not employed, they can claim Jobseekers Allowance in their own right.

In some instances, if your child is under 18 years old, no longer in education or unemployed, and Child Benefit has ceased they may be able to apply for severe hardship payments. However, you must contact the Careers Office in the first instance and ask about these payments.



Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

If you have a child of 16 years of age or over before 30 September 2016 who is remaining at school, the child may be eligible for EMA of £30 per week, from the beginning of school term. All eligible applications received before 30 September 2016 can be backdated to the beginning of term, otherwise claims will only be paid from date they are received.

Forms can be downloaded from: <http://my.stirling.gov.uk/services/education-and-learning/childcare,-school-and-educational-grants/education-maintenance-award>

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE - Tax Credits

Anyone who is in or was in receipt of Tax Credits should have received their annual declaration pack by now. If you have not already completed this, please phone Tax Credits on Tel: 0345 300 3900 and give your information.

If you have sent in your information on the annual declaration form and has not yet received a new award letter, the chances are your annual declaration form has not

been received. You should therefore phone Tax Credits on Tel: 0345 300 3900 and give your information.

Please note that if you were in receipt of Tax Credits and no longer receive these you MUST still complete the annual declaration information or else Tax Credits will state that you have received an overpayment for the monies you previously received.

Tenant Participation Counts - Calling All Residents!

Unfortunately, at Cambusbarron's AGM in March there were not enough residents present to form a constituted group. Over the years the group liaised with the Community Council, held planting days/tidy-up day, events for the children and liaised with Forth regarding the Improvement

Action Plan. Should you be interested in re-establishing a group or are interested in forming a new group in your area, please contact Angela Laley at the office.

We encourage tenant participation at all levels, so if you would like to be involved, please just get in touch.

De Moray Association (RTO), Cornton

Our RTO at De Moray Court, Cornton has been busy. They held a successful AGM when a new Committee were elected:

Chairperson: John McKechnie

Secretary: Gill McGurk

Treasurer: Colleen Sharp

The outgoing Committee Stephen Harland, Val Martin and Caroline Jones were thanked for their hard work over the years. They will be missed.

The group have been busy fund raising and recently



Drawn by young De Moray resident who enjoyed safari trip! organised a successful Car Boot Sale and a trip to the Safari Park for the children. Well done De Moray!

Tenants View Forum

At the meeting in April, the Tenants' View Forum focused on Digital Inclusion, Charter Performance, Customer Care and Forth's plans for 2016/17.

The next meeting will be held Tuesday 6th September at 10.30am at our offices, and will discuss the results of the Joint Tenants Satisfaction Survey, Performance Update and the Allocations/Pets Policies. If you are able to attend please contact Angela Laley at the office.

Want To Get On-Line and Use This Free Service?

Do you feel lost when it comes to technology? Would you like to get on-line? Complete on-line benefit applications? Apply for jobs? Shop for all the latest bargains?

Thanks to Big Lottery Funding, our Digital Inclusion Project – Connecting Stirling – could help you. It doesn't matter how much or how little you already know or what you use to get on-line.

Craig and Ian can come to your home or use a local venue which is convenient for you. By the end of their sessions you should be able to browse with confidence, apply for jobs/benefits, shop for deals, send/receive e mails and engage with social media.

The project is now approaching 6 months, and has been very successful so far. To contact Craig McNicol or Ian Brown,



Craig McNicol and Ian Brown

please phone our office and we will arrange an appointment on your behalf.



Estate Management Visit Dates

Our 2 Housing Officers cover the following areas:

Elaine Shepherd

*Raploch, Cambusbarron,
Dunblane, Riverside,
Stirling Town –Cowane
Street, Myles House,
Tannery Lane/Queen
Street, Crosbies Court,
Victoria Place.*



Elaine will be carrying out an estate visit to your area **week commencing:**

**5 September 2016 and
7 November 2016.**

Caroline Stevenson

*Bannockburn, Braehead,
Fallin, Cornton, Cowie,
Plean, St. Ninians, Whins
of Milton, Stirling Town
- Baker Street/Morris
Terrace, Barn Road.*



Caroline will be carrying out an estate visit to your area **week commencing:**

**12 September 2016 and
14 November 2016.**

Office Closure Due To Public Holidays

Please note that our offices will be closed for the following public holidays:

Friday 15th July and Monday 18th July 2016.

If you have a **genuine** emergency repair over this period please contact:

New tenants at Adamson Place, Cornton, should report genuine emergency repairs to Marshall Construction Tel: 01259 219500. (Refer to your New-Build Handbook). If you have called out a Contractor as an emergency, please advise us as soon as the office opens again.

Gas Central Heating/Hot Water - 0800 048 2710 (Saltire)

Gas Leaks – 0800 111999

**Any Other Genuine Emergency Repairs –
0333 123 1011 (McDougall Group)**

Maintenance Matters

Kitchen Renewals

Our kitchen renewal contract is underway with our Strathfor Partners. The residents of Queen Street, Cowane Street, Tannery Lane and Gillespie Terrace have had their initial surveys completed with works due to take place in August into early September by the successful contractor CCG. Further visits are planned to allow residents to see the proposed kitchen layouts. For further information please contact Barry Lees, Maintenance Officer at the office.

Alteration/Improvements

If you wish to make any alterations or improvements, including installation of a garden shed, permission from Forth is required. Permission will not be unreasonably withheld. However, residents should be aware that there may be cost implications at the end of their tenancy for any required reinstatement works or for bringing works up to the required current standard. Log on to www.forthha.org.uk/repairs/alterations-and-improvements/ for more information.

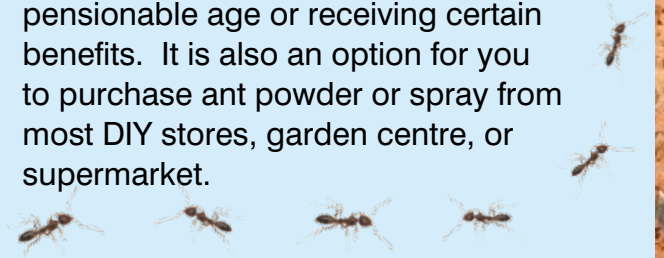


Thinking of Ending Your Tenancy?

Access is required to be provided for end of tenancy visits. This is to provide sufficient time and opportunity for any repairs that are the resident's responsibility. This will help to avoid potential recharges. Log on to www.forthha.org.uk/your-home/ending-your-tenancy/ for more information.

Little Pests In Your Home?

Please remember that we do not provide a service for Pest Control. Should you have little pests in your home, such as ants, wasps/bees, which all thrive in the summer months, or just need advice, please contact Stirling Council on Tel: 0845 277 7000. Please be aware that the Council will charge you for a Pest Control Officer visiting your home unless someone in the household is of pensionable age or receiving certain benefits. It is also an option for you to purchase ant powder or spray from most DIY stores, garden centre, or supermarket.



Busy Building New Homes!

Good progress is being made with our new homes at Cultenhove with Marshall Construction being able to make the most of the reasonably dry weather.

Anyone visiting Earlsburn Avenue or Cultenhove Crescent will see that the shape of the new homes is now evident. If progress is maintained tenants should be moving in about 6 months from now. The new homes range in size from one to 3 bedroom and are a mixture of cottage flats and terraced houses. If you are looking to move to the Cultenhove area and need such a home, get in touch quickly to ensure that your application can be considered.

A further new development has just started on site at Bogside, Dunblane. This will provide 8 homes specially designed and built to meet the needs of the elderly or those with restricted mobility, including 2 fully wheelchair accessible homes. Completion of these will be due in early 2017.

Beyond these developments we are actively working to provide new homes in Raploch, Cornton and Cultenhove. In addition we are talking to a number of builders who hope to start work in other parts of the Stirling area, with a view to including our homes in their plans.



Housing currently under construction at Cultenhove



Noisey Neighbours?

Summer has arrived and hopefully we will enjoy many days of beautiful sunshine. However the summer months bring more complaints from our tenants about noise and partying.

It is a fact of life that the sounds we all make every day, although acceptable to us, are likely to be unwanted by someone else. One person's music is another person's noise.

Remember that no house or flat is totally soundproof - everyone can expect some noise from neighbours. We consider that each

resident can reasonably expect:

- not to have their night's sleep disturbed by noise;
- not to hear excessive noise from someone else, in their property on a regular basis.

Excessive noise can reduce the quality of life and, in some extreme cases, can even destroy it completely.

Please consider your neighbours when enjoying the long nights and should you be approached either by your neighbour or a member of staff, try and understand the issue.

Dog Day News

We have noted that some of our tenants are not following the rules set out by our Pets Policy. Please remember that before you take ownership for any pet you must **request permission** and sign a Pet Ownership Agreement. If you do have a pet and do not have permission please contact the office for a Pet Request Form.

The most common issues we face are tenants with too many pets, pets which are not appropriate for the size/type of the property and pets which are not allowed.

Please remember:

- **The number of animals** allowed is subject to the size of your home.
- **If you live in a flat** you can keep one small or medium

sized dog or one cat in addition to 2 small animals (hamsters, birds etc.)

- **If you live in a house** you can keep one dog or one cat in addition to 2 small animals (hamsters, birds etc.)
- If we receive **consistent and justifiable complaints** in regards to your pet or if the animal is causing deterioration of the property **you may be asked to rehome your pet.**

On a positive note, the Pets Policy is currently up for review so now is your chance to have your say. Please contribute to the new Pets Policy by contacting Christina Ward on 01786 431926 or email student@forthha.org.uk.



Policy Reviews – Please Have Your Say!

The following policies are under review and we welcome and value your views :

Policy	Date of Review
Factoring	July 2016
Tenant Participation	August 2016
Allocations	Oct 2016
Pets	Oct 2016

Therefore, if you would like to be involved in helping to update and improve these policies, please contact Angela Laley at the office or e mail angela@forthha.org.uk. The policy can be sent to you by post or e mail, or by contacting the office. You can also join our E Group who are sent a policy whilst under

review. As a member of the E Group you are asked to return a short questionnaire. To join our E Group just contact the office. For details of how to be involved in the Pets Policy please read the article on P14.



Waste and Recycling Changes

This Autumn Stirling Council is planning to change the system of bins so that householders will have separate containers for plastics, cans and cartons; paper and cardboard; garden and food waste; glass; and non-recyclables.

All bins will be collected fortnightly except for the paper

and cardboard bin which will be collected every 4 weeks.

Please note that city centre properties and flats in other areas are currently being assessed by the Council and may have different arrangements put in place for them.

For more information log on to: www.stirling.gov.uk/waste



What is Breathing Space?

Breathing Space is a free, confidential phone and web based service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, anxiety or depression.

Breathing Space is there in times of difficulty to offer a safe and supportive space by listening and offering advice and information.

When is the phone line available?

Weekdays: Monday to Thursday 6pm-2am

Weekends: (open 24 hours) Friday 6pm-Monday 6am

These are the hours at which many people find that their worries seem unbearable or insurmountable and

other services are likely to be unavailable.

Telephone: 0800 83 85 87

www.breathingspace.scot



Useful Contact Details...

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