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GOOD NEWS - RECRUITING TENANTS!

We are currently looking to recruit tenants to join our friendly Management Committee. The Committee is responsible for our strategies and policies like housing management, maintenance, finance and employment. For information on what was discussed at the last meeting log on to:

<https://www.forthha.org.uk/about-us/management-committee/monthly-committee-briefing/>

Committee members act in a voluntary capacity and receive payment for out-of-pocket expenses.

Serving as a Committee member is both

interesting and worthwhile. Training is available for Committee members and further information about what is involved is available from Grahame Cairns, Director, at the office.

Alternatively, why not become a Tenant Member? Membership is only a £1 and entitles you to:

- attend the AGM,
- vote for the Management Committee
- stand for election to the Committee
- appoint the auditors

So if you have an interest in how your Association is run – why not take the first step and get in touch?

Forth Housing Association Limited

Kildean Business and Enterprise Hub, 146 Drip Road, Raploch, Stirling FK8 1RW

Tel: 01786 446066 • Fax: 01786 445846 • E-mail: info@forthha.org.uk

Forth Housing Association Limited is a Registered Scottish Charity, No. SCO03550

Freedom Of Information - To Apply To Registered Social Landlords From November

After years of consultation, the Scottish Government has announced that freedom of information laws (FOI) will apply to registered social landlords from 11 November 2019.

FOI laws will give you rights to receive more information about how we operate and our functions as a registered social landlord by making a request to us. We must respond to you within 20 working days of receiving your request and, unless the information is exempt, we must disclose it to you. We may charge you a fee for providing you with this information. If you are not happy with how we deal with your request, you can ask us to review how we have handled it. If you are still not happy, you can apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner and the Commissioner may investigate

further.

FOI will only apply to information about the housing services that we provide to you and certain information about our financial wellbeing and standards of governance, which we supply to the Scottish Housing Regulator. It will not extend to information about our factored properties.

In the meantime, our Data Protection Officer, Daradjeet Jagpal, will also assume the role of our Information Officer for FOI purposes and will work with us to ensure we are FOI ready come November. As part of this, Daradjeet will be involved in helping us:

- Catalogue the information we hold to ensure we can handle and respond to FOI requests within the required timescales.
- Prepare our publication scheme and guide to

information, which sets out the information we publish and how it can be accessed. This could often mean you could access the information you are looking for more quickly and without having to make an FOI request to us e.g. via our website or by visiting the office.

- Put in place the necessary FOI policy and procedure to ensure we comply and process requests in line with the law.
- Deliver training so staff know how to recognise an FOI request and how it should be handled.

We will provide you with more information about FOI in future newsletters, including how to make a request and the details you must include within your request before we can process it.

New Tenant Services Manager

We are pleased to announce that our new Tenant Services Manager, Nicola Stobie, has now started at Forth. Nicola previously worked for Hillcrest Housing Association and has vast experience in the housing sector.

Nicola said: “ I look forward to our Tenant Services team continuing to provide a high quality service to our tenants and to meeting Forths’ customers over the coming months.”

We are sure that you will make Nicola feel very welcome and if you happen to see her out and about in your estate please feel free to say hello.

Contact details: Nicola@fortha.org.uk, Direct Dial Tel No: 01786 431925



Be Neighbourly – Share Your Shared Garden

During the Summer months issues with communal gardens can become more apparent. We would remind tenants to ensure that they close communal garden gates and ensure that they do not leave any pets unattended in this area.

Sometimes tenants on the ground floor take over the full area. We would respectfully remind tenants that neighbours on the first floor have equal entitlement to shared gardens including drying areas.

Also, any large items such as trampolines require not only Forth's prior permission but also all neighbours permission before situating. We aim to be reasonable therefore if there is an accumulation of items such as kids toys, please contact us to discuss an application for storage/shed, or a transfer to a house. We have the right to have these items uplifted should they impact upon landscaping or they are not moved prior to grass cutting. If you have any questions regarding these issues please contact your Assistant Housing Officer, for more advice.

Raising Money for Cancer Research and Getting Fit!

Well done to one of our tenants, Priscilla Maramba, who recently took part in a 5k race to raise money for Cancer Research. Raising over £315 for this worthwhile cause whilst getting fit has motivated Priscilla to keep running. Priscilla said: "Before this race I thought I could not run, now I am looking forward to the next one at Blair Drummond Safari Park." If you would like to add to the sponsorship money log on to: <https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/priscillas-race-for-life-25>



Gardening Can Be Blooming Marvellous

- Annual Garden Competition!

Many of our tenants take great satisfaction in their gardens, hanging baskets and pots etc. We feel it is important to recognise this which is why we are again holding our annual garden competition. This is a great opportunity to brighten up your development and make your home look top tip! It is also an opportunity to socialise with neighbours of a similar interest and enjoy the outdoors!

A guest judge will visit our developments over the Summer period and the exact date of the judging will be a surprise..... However, the winners will be announced in our Autumn Newsletter together with photos of the winning gardens.

The 3 categories will be £40 for best garden, £25 for best basket/pot display and £50 for best scheme. Last year there were 3 sets of winners who each won supermarket vouchers together with a number of commended certificates. We are sure that this year there will be just as many green fingered tenants.

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.

Gardening is a healthy, fun activity that enhances not just your own area but the wider community. Happy gardening and good luck!!



Forth Values Staff Training – A Huge Well Done to 2 Staff Members!

We encourage our staff to continue with personal development and are pleased to confirm that 2 of our staff have recently completed training.

Modern Apprentice Award!



Becky receiving her SVQ 3 Certificate in Business Administration from Clare Munro, Forth Valley College.

We are pleased to announce that our Modern Apprentice, Becky Ramage, has completed

her Level 3 in Business Administration, ahead of schedule. This has been facilitated by working with Forth Valley College as a Training Provider. This course provides skills and competencies required to be an effective Business Administrator. Modern Apprenticeships are available to employees aged 16 or over and give an introduction to the workplace as well as training for a young person.

Becky has been appointed as our Customer Services Assistant and will continue her role in Corporate Services. However, the studying has not finished as she will now commence training on an Institute of Housing qualification to expand her knowledge in housing.

Diploma In Accountancy and Finance

Our Assistant Finance Officer, Shona MacLeod, has been awarded with a Diplomacy in Accountancy and Business by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants. This was achieved over a 2 and a half year period, through distance learning provided by the Association of Chartered Accountants. So we can be rest assured that our finances are in safe hands. Well done Shona!

Estate Management Visit Dates From Your Housing Officer

Our 2 Housing Officers cover the following areas:

Elaine Shepherd – Raploch,
Cambusbarron, Dunblane, Riverside,
Stirling Town – Baker Street/Morris Terrace,
Cowane Street, Crosbies Court, Myles
House, Tannery Lane/Queen Street, Victoria
Place.



Caroline Stevenson – Bannockburn,
Braehead, Fallin, Cornton, Cowie, Plean,
St. Ninians, Whins of Milton, Stirling Town -
Barn Road.



Elaine and Caroline will be carrying out estate visits to your area
during July and September 2019.

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 19)

- 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
- Parents in receipt of Universal Credit

Applications for clothing grant MUST be made by 31.12.19

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 £6,900 annual income
- Parents in receipt of Universal Credit

Forms for both Clothing Grant and free School Meals available from Stirling Council Tel: 0845 277 7000 or can be downloaded from www.stirling.gov.uk

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 Universal Credit 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 benefits. However, they 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 2019 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 2019 can be backdated to the beginning of term, otherwise claims will only be paid from date they are received.

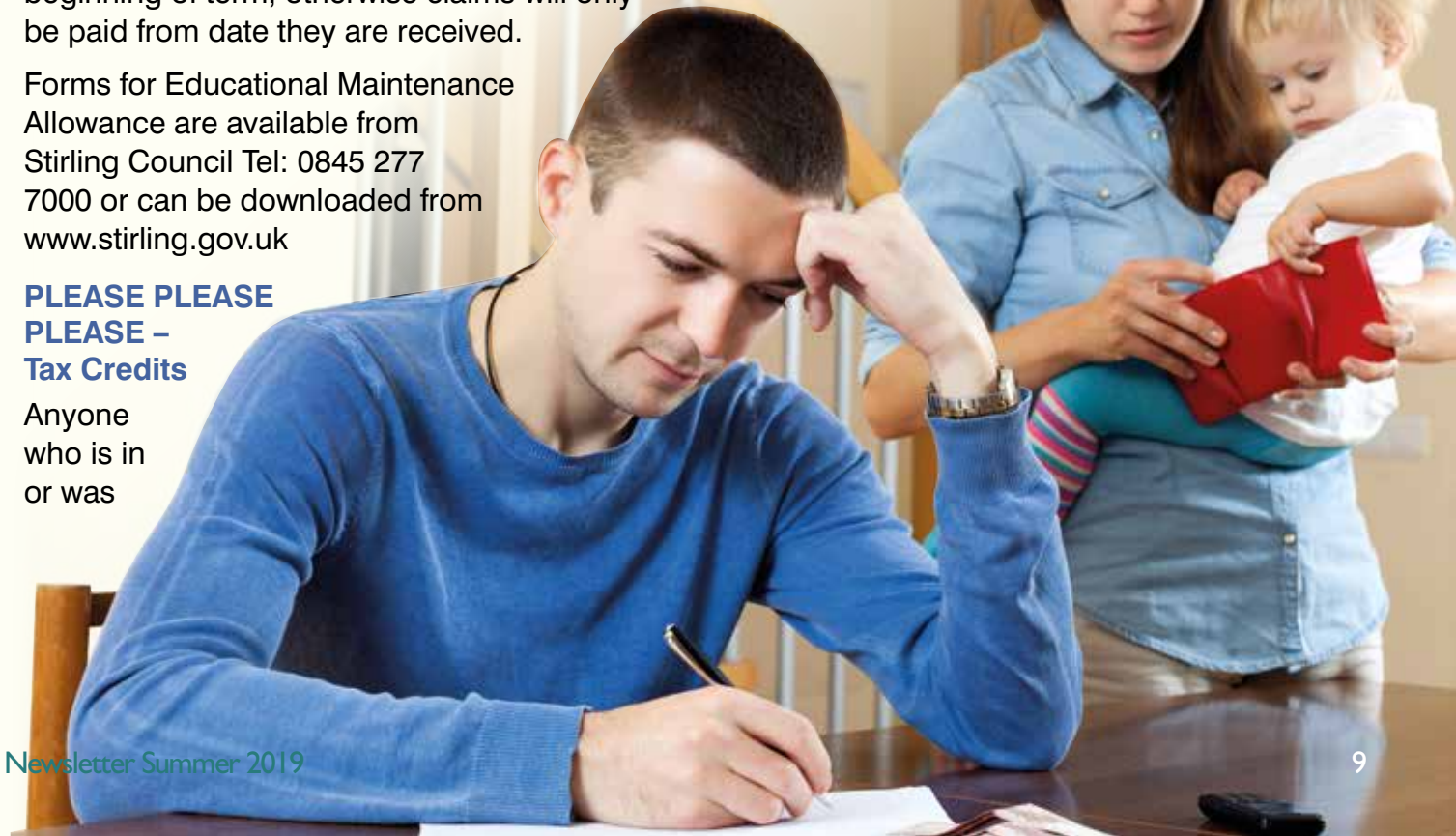
Forms for Educational Maintenance Allowance are available from Stirling Council Tel: 0845 277 7000 or can be downloaded from www.stirling.gov.uk

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.

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.



Early Learning Payment

You can apply from your child's second birthday up to the day your child is 3 years 6 months old.

If you get the Early Learning Payment, you'll be paid £250 for each child you get the payment for.

School Age Payment

From 3rd June 2019 until 28th February 2020 you can apply for the School Age Payment for children born between 1.3.14 and 28.2.15.

If you can get the School Age Payment, you'll be paid £250 for each child you can get the

payment for.

To be eligible for either of the above payments you must be in receipt of at least one of the following benefits:-

- Child Tax Credit
- Universal Credit



- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), not 'contribution based' JSA
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), not 'contribution based' ESA

To make a claim please phone 0800 182 2222 option 1 (Best Start Grant) or you can apply online at <https://www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant/> (at very bottom of page).

UC Universal Credit – We Are Here To Help You

Just a reminder that should you have any queries regarding your Universal Credit claim, you should contact Tracy Doran our Income Maximisation Officer direct. So if you have any questions or issues just give Tracy a call Tel: 01786 431921 or email tracy@forthha.org.uk

Let's Get Scotland Walking - the National Walking Strategy

A major plan which aims to make Scotland a world leader as a walking-friendly country has been updated and relaunched. Walking is the easiest and most accessible form of physical activity to keep you healthy and happy. The Strategy sets out a vision where everyone benefits from walking as part of their everyday journeys, and everyone has access to welcoming and safe environments to walk in. First published in 2014 by the Scottish Government, the National Walking Strategy (NWS) is a longterm plan to get more people in Scotland walking more often, improving the nation's health and wellbeing. There are free, accessible and social walks taking place all over Scotland. For more information please visit website: <https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/news/news-post/national-walking-strategy-aims-to-make-scotland-oneof-the-worlds-most-walking-friendly>



How To Control Giant Hogweed

Giant hogweed is a highly invasive plant spread by seed. The plant has a chemical in its sap which has the potential to cause injury.

We are aware that some properties either have hogweed, or are close to hogweed. This is an extract of how it should be managed.

- If you are responsible for your own back garden area, the best way is to mow often to prevent the hogweed from flowering.
- Herbicide – This is best when the plants are young. A garden herbicide with glyphosate kills plants when they are small. Please follow the instructions on the packet and check after 2 weeks to make sure that all the plants are dying. Re-apply if necessary.
- Cutting – Cutting the plant repeatedly throughout the season will stop it from flowering and it will die eventually. Wear

long sleeves and gloves – keep the sap off your skin – and wash everything afterwards.

- Digging – If you have only a few plants, dig them up, making sure you cut the tap root at least 10 cm (4 inches) below ground level and shake all the soil from the root. To prevent any possible spread, do not take the plant away (and do not put it in your brown bin, if you have one). Let it rot, with the roots exposed to dry out. Wear long sleeves and gloves – keep the sap off your skin – and wash everything afterwards.
- Keep Checking – Whichever treatment you use, check it, and make sure you have got them all. And do the same thing next year. Be thorough and there will be less and less!

Stirling Council has a giant hogweed eradication strategy. If you do see this plant in a communal area, please report to Stirling Council on Tel: 01786 404040.



Tenant Involvement – *Why Not Have Your Say?*

We want tenants to have every opportunity to have their say and influence decisions about their community. There are a variety of ways you can become more involved and help to make the decisions in relation to the services we provide:

Tenants View Forum

This is a group of tenants who meet up a few times a year to look at how certain services can be improved by examining performance. The Forum is also consulted regarding policies that are under review and feedback is given by the group. We provide the support, information to the Forum and staff are in attendance. Training can also be provided.

Form A Registered Tenants Organisation or Tenant's Group

We encourage and support tenants who form groups.

The benefits of registering as an RTO are as follows:

- A right to be consulted over proposed changes to housing services
- Support from Forth (usually an annual grant)
- The opportunity of applying for grant funding from the Scottish Housing Regulator and other grant bodies
- The opportunity to get involved in regional RTO networking forums.

E Group

You can join our E Group by providing your e mail address. This group provides us with feedback by e mail on policies and issues affecting Forth.

If you are interested in joining these groups please contact Angela Laley, Project & Communications Co-ordinator, at the office.



Have You Signed Up to Our Paperless Service?

We are offering tenants the option to go “paperless” and to receive correspondence relating to their tenancy by email. Not only is this a fast and convenient way to receive your correspondence, it also helps us become more environmentally friendly. This is an opt-in service, so if you are interested, please email: info@forthha.org.uk with your name and address.

WELL DONE TO OUR SURVEY WINNERS!

A huge well done to our quarterly winners who have each won a £25 voucher.

Gas Service and Repair - J Barr, Stirling.

General Repairs - W Millar, Plean.

New Home - R Cunningham, Cornton.

Kitchen Replacement - E Devlin, Raploch.

Bathroom Replacement - M Barr, St Ninians.

Please keep returning our questionnaires and responding to our texts. Next time you could be a winner. We value your feedback which helps us to improve our services to you.





Office Closures Due To Public Holidays

We would like you to note that our offices will be closed for the following public holidays:

Office Closes: Thursday 11th July at 5.15pm.

Office Reopens: Tuesday 16th July at 9am.

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

Gas Central Heating - 0800 048 2710 (Saltire)

Gas Leaks – 0800 111999

For genuine emergency repairs (excluding gas heating and hot water) outwith office hours please telephone The McDougall Group on Tel No: 0333 123 1011.

 DogsTrust

£50 Neutering

Available for dog owners in receipt of means-tested benefits for selected breeds of dog*



Neutering is a simple operation that prevents male and female dogs from having litters.

Call our neutering hotline 0333 202 1148 for more information or visit www.dogstrust.org.uk

*Staffordshire Bull Terriers, Mastiffs, Rottweilers, American Bulldogs, Greyhounds, Lurchers, Akitas, Huskies, Malamutes, German Shepherds, Samoyeds, Jack Russell Terriers, Border Collies, Crossbreeds where one of the breeds is identifiable as one of those listed.

Reminder – Please Let Us Know If You Change Your Mobile Number!



As we are communicating more and more by text, it is important that we are advised if you change this number. You can do this by phoning the office or e mailing info@forthha.org.uk.

Information Updates

For further information and updates please refer to our website, www.forthha.org.uk



Useful Contact Details...
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 Kildean Business and Enterprise Hub,
 146 Drip Road, Raploch, Stirling FK8 1RW
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 E-mail: info@forthha.org.uk Website: www.forthha.org.uk



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