



FORTH  
housing association Ltd

# SpeakingForth

The newsletter of Forth Housing Association Ltd

Spring 2020

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# Happy Easter!

The Committee and Staff would like to wish you all a very Happy Easter! We would also like you to note that our offices will be closed for the following public holidays:

**Office Closes:** Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April at 5.15pm.

**Office Reopens:** Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April at 9am.

In addition please note the following office closures in May:

Office closed Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May,  
Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May and  
Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May.

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.**



## Forth Housing Association Limited

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# DEVELOPMENT UPDATE – Bringing new homes to Raploch!

Some of our Raploch tenants may have noticed that works have started on 2 sites in the Raploch, which will bring much needed homes for rent to the area.

## **PENMAN COURT, DRIP ROAD, STIRLING**

This site is adjacent to our own offices at Drip Road, Stirling and is providing:

- 6 x 2 person/2 apartment flats
- 6 x 4 person/3 apartment semi-detached houses
- 4 x 5 person/4 apartment semi-detached houses

Anticipated completion date is February 2021 and the total project cost is £2.2m.

## **BILLY BREMNER WAY/FAIRLEY CRESCENT, RAPLOCH**

Our site is part of the former Raploch Primary School and is providing:

- 16 x 2 person / 2 apartment cottage flats
- 2 x 6 person / 4 apartment semi-detached houses
- 8 x 4 person / 3 apartment cottage flats
- 3 x 4 person / 3 apartment terraced houses
- 8 x 5 person / 4 apartment semi-detached houses

Anticipated completion date for this site is July 2022 and the total project cost is £5.2m.

We will keep you posted with progress at these 2 sites over the coming months.

# Staff News - *Congratulations!*

Many congratulations to Kevin Milne and his wife Fabiana, on the birth of their beautiful baby son, Arran, in December. Arran was born on 29<sup>th</sup> December weighing 51bs 13oz. Kevin is enjoying having 2 sons now to look after and Ethan is enjoying being a big brother.



## Rent Increase – Keeping Rents Down By Providing Lowest Increase!

**We are pleased to say that this year we are increasing our rents by 2.1% applying from 1st April, the lowest in the Stirling area. Our approach has been possible by keeping a tight rein on our costs.**

The current economic climate is tough for all tenants and by making one of the the lowest rent increases in the Stirling area,

we are doing what we can to keep costs reasonable and providing value for money.

In 2020 we understand that rent increases will be as follows:

- Forth 2.1%
- Ochil View 2.3%
- Rural Stirling 2.4%
- Stirling Council 3.2%



# Communication With Our Tenants – Stay In Touch!

**Communication with our tenants is hugely important to Forth and it is sometimes overlooked the time, you our tenants give by becoming Committee members, attending Tenant Forums, returning surveys and replying to texts. Thank-you for your time – it is much appreciated.**

It is therefore important you ensure we have your correct details, whether it's a mobile number or an email address. Recently we emailed over 130 tenants but approximately 10% were rejected. We all change providers, we change jobs and therefore these emails are no longer relevant but by not informing us, our communication with you reduces.

Technology moves at a frightening speed

and even we struggle keeping up to date with all the social platforms and language that is used. Communicating with companies by email is a worthwhile option, as it can be done whenever it suits. So please keep updating your information to us and it can be done in so many ways.

A visit to the office, a phone call to the office, an email to [info@forthha.org.uk](mailto:info@forthha.org.uk) or whenever you see a staff member in your development, is all that is needed. It is logical to appreciate that Forth will require to do more communication electronically or via our website, so by having your information, we can tailor your preferred wishes.

# Consumer Contract Changes Could Save Customers Money - Are You Out of Contract?

**Broadband, TV and phone customers will be given the chance to avoid hefty price hikes when their contracts end under new rules.**

UK Watchdog Ofcom says users could save £150 a year on broadband alone once they are informed of alternative deals. Around 20 million customers are out of contract with their suppliers, leaving many paying more than they need to. The Regulator says people can earn big monthly savings if they are told in advance of discounts on new deals.

Matt Powell, editor at comparison site Broadband Genie, said the requirement for companies to warn when contracts are about to expire would help loyal customers remain on the best plans. “Many broadband deals are sold with discounts for the initial contract term, and although these are often good value for the first 12 or 18 months, the cost after the discount ends can be substantially higher,” he said.

“Regularly switching will let you take advantage of the latest offers and perhaps get you a faster connection. And if you don’t want to switch, you should always negotiate with the provider at the end of your contract term to see if a better deal is available.”

Service providers will need to text, email or write to their customers between 10 and 40 days before their contracts come to an end, giving details of:

- the date their contracts can be terminated without penalty
- the price they have been paying
- any changes to the price or service that come into effect automatically after that date
- how much notice they need to give to cancel the deal
- the best alternative subscriptions on offer, including the prices charged to new customers



# Attention All Green Fingered Tenants - Garden Competition!

**We are again holding our annual garden competition over the Summer. A guest judge will choose 2 gardens over the Summer period and 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 vouchers.

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](mailto: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 so happy gardening and good luck!!

## Landscapers Become Environmentally Friendly!

We are delighted to let you know that our Landscapers, Inverallan, will be using all battery machinery (lawnmowers, hedge cutters, strimmers and blowers) for all our developments this year from April. They are also hoping by mid Summer that an electric vehicle will be added giving our grounds maintenance works 100% environmentally friendly credentials. So hopefully our tenants will also benefit, as well as the environment, as these battery operated machines are less noisy as well as more efficient!

# Tenant Participation News Round-Up

## Tenants View Forum

Our next Tenants View Forum meetings are at our offices as follows:

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May at 6.30pm-7.30pm.** This will discuss our key areas of performance and the results of the Joint Tenants Satisfaction Survey. This is to enable any tenants who are unable to attend our day time meetings the opportunity to attend in the evening.

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July at 11am-12.30pm.** This meeting will discuss policies under review, our key areas of performance and a presentation from our Maintenance Officer, Paul Fraser on what we are doing to be carbon neutral.

If you have a topic that would like to be discussed at these meetings, please just call the office or e mail [angela@forthhha.org.uk](mailto:angela@forthhha.org.uk). We would love to have your feedback. So please come along. It is your feedback, based upon your first hand experience that helps us to improve our service. Refreshments will be served and travelling expenses reimbursed – just bring a receipt.

## Policies Under Review – Have Your Say!

The following policies are under review. So if you would like to be involved in this process, please get in touch. Our E Group reviews policies by answering a short questionnaire by e mail. So if you are not a member why not join this group and have your say? Alternatively, you can join our Tenants View Forum who meet at our office 3-4 times per year. Just e-mail [info@forthhha.org.uk](mailto:info@forthhha.org.uk) or phone the office, with your contact details.

Date	Policies
May 20	Complaints
June 20	Adaptations
July 20	Rent Arrears
July 20	Voids
July 20	Harassment

## De Moray – AGM

De Moray Association are holding their AGM on **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June at 6.30pm** at Cornton Primary School. At this meeting the office bearers will be elected and the work plan for the next 12 months will be discussed. So please support your local group by attending. Without your support this work will not go ahead.

# Estate Management Visit Dates From Your Housing Service Officer

## Our 2 Housing Service 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.



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

11th May 2020

**Kelly Cadden** – Bannockburn, Braehead, Fallin, Cornton, Cowie, Plean, St. Ninians, Whins of Milton, Stirling Town - Barn Road.



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

18th May 2020.

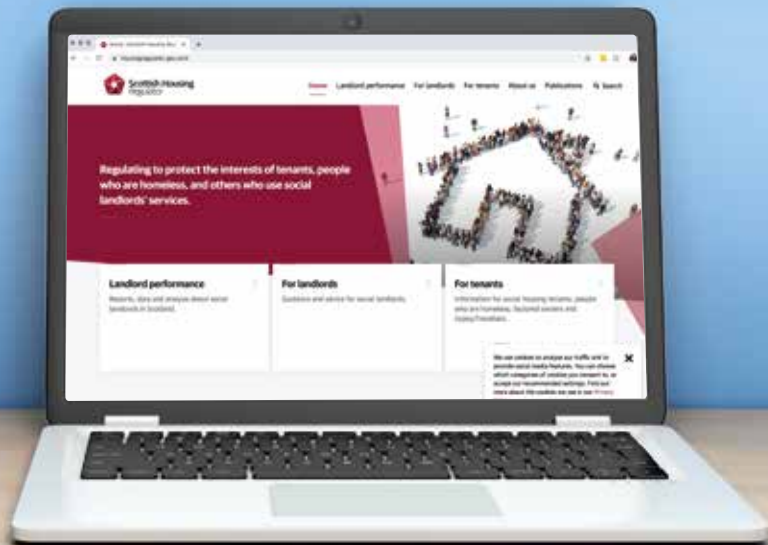


# How We Regulate - A Guide for Tenants and Service Users

The Scottish Housing Regulator has recently published 'How We Regulate: A guide for tenants and service users'. The guide has been written to help people find out more about the Regulator's work. It also explains how tenants can find out about their landlord, what they can expect from it, and how they can make a complaint.

For more information log on to:  
<https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-tenants/how-we-regulate-information-for-tenants/how-we-regulate-a-guide-for-tenants-and-service-users>

E-mail: [shr@shr.gov.scot](mailto:shr@shr.gov.scot) or  
Call: 0141 242 5642



**Scottish Housing  
Regulator**

## Forth's Annual Assurance Statement – Available Now

Landlord self-assurance is at the heart of the Regulator's approach. An important part of this is our Annual Assurance Statement. This is the way that our Management Committee is assured that we comply with regulatory requirements or standards. The Regulator will use this Statement to assess our risk and to decide how to engage with ourselves.

Log on to [www.forthha.org.uk/downloads](http://www.forthha.org.uk/downloads) or phone our office for a copy of the Assurance Statement.

# Maintenance Matters – Planned and Cyclical Maintenance 2020/21

PLANNED	STREET	NO OF PROPERTIES	Envisaged Start Dates
<b>Bathroom Replacement</b>	Bruce View		Summer/Autumn 2020
	Myles House	29	
<b>Window Replacement</b>	Barn Rd (3-31)	14	Subject to planning permission
<b>Gas Boiler Replacement</b>	Cowane St		April- May 2020
	Cooperage Quay		
	Cask Crescent		
	Bruce Street		
	Abbey Road		
	Chapelcroft	66	
<b>Kitchen Replacement</b>	Cooperage Quay		April- June 2020
	Cask Crescent		
	Abbey Road	50	
	Bruce St	4	
	37 Bruce St	1	
	Chapelcroft	3	
<b>CYCLICAL</b>			
<b>External Painting</b>	Clayhills Drive	48	Late May- August
	Baker St/Morris Tce	18	
	Riverside	50	
	Colliers Rd/Hirst Cres	35	
	Chapelcroft	3	
	Fleurs Park	1	

<b>Electrical Safety</b>	Bruce St	5	Throughout year
	Chapelcroft	3	
	Adamson Place	16	
	Riverside	56	
	Clayhills Drive	48	
	De Moray Court	40	
	Gillespie Place	3	
	Vorlich Place	1	
	Myles House	10	
<b>Gas Servicing</b>		846	Throughout year
<b>Emergency Lighting</b>	29 closes		Throughout year

Please note that the dates in the table are indicative and we will advise each tenant regarding the specific start date, nearer the start date.

## EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report) – Electrical Safety Checks

We carry out electrical checks to our housing stock to identify any faults within the electrical circuits of the property. It is also for your safety within your home.

If your home has been identified for a test this year you will receive a letter. We would ask that you work with us and allow the Contractor access to carry out the test. This will ensure your home is electrically safe and offer piece of mind to you.

Should you have any questions, please contact Paul Fraser, Maintenance Officer, at the office Direct Dial Tel No: 01786 431026.



# Town Break – Befriending Service

**Town Break's befriending service runs throughout the Stirling area. Visits are roughly 2 hours per week and provide face-to-face interaction. Individuals are matched based on mutually shared hobbies and interests. They aim to meet individual needs and activities may include meeting for coffee, going for a walk etc. The befrienders are PVG checked and offer a wealth of experience from many backgrounds.**

The benefits may include;

- Discovering hobbies old and new
- Making new friendships
- Developing skills
- Building mutual confidence and self-esteem.

Tel: 01786 641841 or E Mail:  
[admin@townbreakstirling.org](mailto:admin@townbreakstirling.org)  
for more information.



# Complaints Performance - October to December 2019

We received  
**7**  
compliments

*You said:* Unhappy with some landscaping issues.

*We did:* Discussed issues with Contractor to improve landscaping standards.

Housing Service Officers monitoring grass cutting, weed control and pruning of shrubbery and will also ensure that contractors are meeting the contract specification.

We received  
**42**  
complaints

*You said:* Unhappy with standard letter as did not take account of full situation with arrears.

*We did:* History of rent account will be checked before issuing standard letter for arrears.

**52%**  
of complaints  
were upheld

*You said:* Unhappy that windows were painted when shut.

*We did:* We met and reinforced to Painting Contractor not to paint when windows shut.

All complaints  
were responded  
to in full and  
within SPSO  
timescale

*You said:* Unhappy with some close cleaning issues.

*We did:* Housing Service Officers discussed issues with Close Cleaning Contractor.

Housing Service Officers will ensure contract specification is being met.



## Got Something To Share?

**Your Housing Service Officer is often your first point of contact when something is happening around your home. Sometimes however they are not the appropriate person to contact particularly when this relates to illegal activity.**

We understand the anxieties and concerns regarding reporting some matters to the Police, you can however report this completely anonymously to Crimestoppers. They are not the police but an independent charity working to help communities.

If you have access to the internet you can report non emergency issues eg drug issues, doorstep crime, drink driving to [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org). You can also call them in confidence on 0800 555 111.

Please refer to [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org) for more information.

## Survey Winners – Your Feedback Is Important!

We are pleased to announce the following winners who each won a £25 voucher.

- **Gas Repair** – C Kelly, Raploch
- **Repairs** – N Donaldson, Stirling
- **Close Cleaning** – D Brierton, Whins Of Milton
- **Landscape Maintenance** – M Low, Raploch
- **Electrical Safety** – J Lowe, Raploch
- **Painterwork Survey** – K McLaren, Braehead
- **Gas Boiler Survey** – M Welsh, Raploch

We value tenant feedback as it is this feedback that helps us improve our services to you. So please keep responding and keeping your information current – so we can respond to you!

# Food Train – Stirling

Local volunteers provide weekly deliveries of fresh groceries to older people experiencing difficulties doing their weekly grocery shopping, ensuring they can eat well, live well and age well.

## How Does It Work?

- The shopping delivery service is a simple process.
- Customers complete a blank shopping list which is collected by volunteers; a blank shopping list is left with customer for next time.
- Shopping is completed and delivered by volunteers at local shops on a nominated day.
- Shopping is delivered in a box which is unpacked by volunteers. Volunteers will also put things away if needed.
- Customer pays for shopping and the £5 delivery charge, cash or cheque is acceptable.

## Who Can Use The Food Train?

- Customers must be 65 and over.
- Customers must be unable or have difficulty getting their grocery shopping.



## How Much Does It Cost?

- £1 for one year's membership – this is paid when beginning the service and provides access to extra services as well.
- £5 per delivery – this is paid alongside the cost of the shopping at the point of delivery.
- To receive the Food Train Service please **fill in a referral form at the [foodtrain.co.uk](http://foodtrain.co.uk)**, or if you'd like to speak to someone please  
Tel: 01786 450536 or e mail  
[stirling@thefoodtrain.co.uk](mailto:stirling@thefoodtrain.co.uk)

# Have You Signed Up to Our Paperless Service?

**Information Updates**  
For further information and updates please refer to our website, [www.forthha.org.uk](http://www.forthha.org.uk) under News.

We have been offering tenants the option to go “paperless” and to receive correspondence relating to their tenancy by e mail. 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 e mail: [info@forthha.org.uk](mailto:info@forthha.org.uk) with your name and address. So far this has proven successful, but we are still looking to encourage more of our tenants to sign up. Therefore, if you have any questions that are stopping you sign-up just get in touch with the office, who will be happy to explain.



Useful Contact Details...

**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](mailto:info@forthha.org.uk) Website: [www.forthha.org.uk](http://www.forthha.org.uk)



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