



SUMMER EDITION / AUGUST 2021

News for our tenants, members and local communities

## Welcome to the Summer Edition

Hello everyone and welcome to the summer edition of our newsletter.

This summer we have been experiencing extremes of weather. We have had unprecedented high temperatures and flash floods. Climate scientists have long predicted that human-caused climate disruption would lead to more heatwaves and flooding and we need to act now. We have prioritised taking action to address climate change in our Strategic Plan. Flash floods can be devastating and we have more information in this edition about how you can protect your home and belongings. Please read our newsletter and visit our website where you can find lots of links to other great sources of support and information [www.rsha.org.uk](http://www.rsha.org.uk)

If you have any suggestions for content for future editions, please get in touch. We would love to hear from you.

Please remember that our office is still currently closed with a reduced staff team in a few days a week only, to attend to tasks like opening mail, issuing keys to contractors and so on. The majority of our team are still working from home. We are planning to reopen soon and have all the required measures in place to do so safely.

We anticipate that our office will reopen from the beginning of September with a reduced staff team working in the office/working from home on a rota basis. In this edition we can tell you more about our plans.

**Keep safe everyone and please remember the key guidance – the FACTS: face coverings should be worn in enclosed spaces; avoid crowded areas; clean your hands and hard surfaces regularly and thoroughly; 1 metre distancing remains in place in certain situations for example public transport and shops; self-isolate, and book a test immediately, if you have symptoms of COVID-19, take the vaccine when it is offered to you and test twice weekly.**

Donna Birrell, CEO



## Rural Stirling Housing Association's

# 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**RSHA is 30 years old** – things have certainly changed a lot since the Association came to life back in December 1990. To help mark the occasion we plan to produce a commemorative edition of our Annual Performance Report – which is due to be published in September this year. Perhaps over the forthcoming months we will be able to mark it in other ways – watch this space!

Have you or your family been a Rural Stirling tenant since the early days? We would be delighted to hear from you and your early memories. Please get in touch.

### In This Issue

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Consultation on new office opening hours</li> <li> Annual Assurance Statement 2021</li> <li> Board Recruitment</li> <li> Virtual AGM</li> <li> Customer Engagement Strategy</li> <li> Legionella</li> <li> What benefits can you claim?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Climate change, Flood risks, home contents insurance</li> <li> Annual Garden Competition</li> <li> Good Neighbour Award Scheme</li> <li> Fire Safety Upgrades</li> <li> Adaptations to Help You Continue to Live in Your Home</li> <li> We have launched our new video consulting service, Near Me</li> <li> Condensation Advice</li> </ul>
---	--

## Consultation on NEW office opening hours



The COVID 19 pandemic has changed all our lives and the world of work beyond all recognition. We adapted very quickly to new ways of working but these have now become business as usual. Whilst we are still learning to live side by side with the virus there is also a yearning for a return to some semblance of normality and this includes how we return to our places of work.

Now restrictions have eased, we will open our office to our tenants again. We will make sure our office is safe and will reopen in line with the regulations. We have to accept however that we are a changed organisation and the lives of those we house, and support has also changed. We need to understand how COVID has impacted on our tenants and the services they need, want, and expect from us.

We are currently consulting with tenants about how we reopen our offices and the services that are important to you. This is a fantastic opportunity for you to help us to shape how we can work together in a more flexible way, but also ensure that we can continue to provide our tenants with the best possible service. Please help us by completing the survey and returning it to us. We will of course keep you informed of any changes we make and provide you with full feedback from the survey.

Thank you to everyone who has already taken the time to tell us what they think, it is very much appreciated.

## RSHA's Text Messaging service (SMS)



Occasionally we send out information via our text messaging service. To receive these messages please ensure we have your up-to-date mobile number so that we can keep you updated. Text messages we send out are for information only.



**This is a one-way service which means we do not have the ability to receive replies to these texts.**

If you would rather not hear from us in this way please let us know and we will make sure you no longer receive texts from us.

## Annual Assurance Statement 2021



All Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) must submit an Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR).

This provides assurance that we are complying with the relevant requirements of the SHR's Regulatory Framework. This includes regulatory requirements that apply to all social landlords and the Standards of Governance and Financial Management that apply to RSLs. We have started to prepare our next Annual Assurance Statement due to be submitted in October 2021.

If you would like any further information about what this involves or would be interested in getting involved or could you take some time to give us your views, please get in touch.

**Board Roundup:** The May and June Board meetings had full Agendas with a lot of key decisions being made. At the May Board, the Annual Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter (ARC) was presented and approved by the Board. The ARC is an annual return that is submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The Board acknowledged a good set of results despite the impacts of COVID. The SHR will publish the ARC returns from all Scottish Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) towards the end of August and we will provide feedback on our performance and details of how we compare to other RSLs in our Annual Performance Report.

### Other items presented to the Board included:

- **Annual Board Appraisal Reviews and Group Learning and Development Plan:** Our people are our greatest asset and everyone who works for us needs to have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective. Each year an annual review is undertaken, and a learning and development plan is approved.
- **Customer Engagement Strategy:** The Board approved our new Customer Engagement Strategy. We will now be taking forward the actions identified in the strategy to help improve how we engage and communicate with our tenants.
- **Digital Strategy:** We are currently developing a Digital Strategy and will keep you updated on our progress. Please get in touch if you have skills in this area and would be interested in working with us on the development of our strategy and digital services.
- **SHR Financial Returns:** These were presented to the Board and approved.

**Please visit our website for more information on Board Agendas, topics, and discussions.**



[www.rsha.org.uk](http://www.rsha.org.uk)

## Board Recruitment

### Does the work of our Board interest you?

We are currently recruiting for new Board members, and we would be delighted to hear from tenants who would be keen to volunteer and get involved with the work that we do.

Please get in touch with our CEO if this is of interest [donna@rsha.org.uk](mailto:donna@rsha.org.uk)

## Save the date for RSHA's virtual AGM Thursday 16th September at 7pm

This year's AGM will be held online to keep our members safe whilst ensuring that we also carry out the usual business and allow our members to express their views on a number of important topics.



We are currently making sure we have an up-to-date membership list and contact details for all of our members to allow us to make the necessary arrangements. Please look out for more details to follow.



Supporting everyone in Scotland to get online

### Being online is an essential lifeline.

Throughout the Coronavirus pandemic, the internet has kept us connected to friends and family. It has kept us informed, entertained and able to work and learn whilst enabling us to access most services.

However, we know that some people aren't able to access these benefits because they don't have the confidence, kit or connectivity at home. We want everyone to benefit from the advantages being connected to the internet bring, and were successful in an application to receive 18 devices from Connecting Scotland. The devices have been distributed to people previously not connected, and, where needed support has been provided to use online services and set up an email account.

Please remember our staff are Digital Champions, and where possible will support you to get online. Please contact the office on 01786 841101 or email [enquiries@rsha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsha.org.uk) to find out more.

## Making Sure You are at the Heart of Everything We Do

In the Spring edition of Rural Matters, we told you that we would share your feedback about our Customer Engagement Strategy. The feedback received is available on the website and was largely supportive of the new strategy.

As a result, the Strategy was approved by the Board in June and we are delighted to launch our new Customer Engagement Strategy, now available on the website. The strategy makes it clear that we will be working closely with you to ensure we are providing the right services in the right way. This will be achieved by the following:

- A new tenants' group, to meet three times a year to discuss issues of your choice with members of staff of your choice.
- A new group to look at how we provide our services and see if they can be carried out more efficiently and effectively. Your input will only be required once or twice a year.
- An editorial team who will review our publications before going to print, so that any recommendations can be implemented before being published.
- A consultation panel, who we can contact for feedback about proposed changes to the way in which we deliver our services.

If you can help us, we would love to hear from you. Make sure you are at the heart of everything we do by giving us your feedback please contact Lesley McGregor on 01786 841101 or email Lesley at [lesley@rsha.org.uk](mailto:lesley@rsha.org.uk).



Thank you for your continued support.

## Addiction Support

Rehab 4 Addiction is an advisory and referral service for people who suffer from alcohol, drug and behavioural addiction.

<https://www.rehab4addiction.co.uk/>



# Legionella Alert

Legionella is a type of bacteria found naturally in freshwater environments, like lakes and streams. It can become a health concern when it grows and spreads in human-made water systems like showerheads, taps, hot water tanks and heaters.



**Catching Legionnaires disease in your home is rare but if you have been away from home for more than a week there are a few steps you can take to minimise the risk such as:-**

- Flushing out your water system e.g. If you aren't using showers or taps regularly, make sure you flush them through at least once a week.
- To flush out your water you need to run the water in all showers, baths, wash basins, sinks and taps continuously for at least 5-10 minutes, beginning with the sink taps. You must do both hot and cold taps.
- When turning taps on, turn them on slowly so that you don't splash water, as this might release water droplets into the air.
- Flush toilet/s with the lid down following a period of non-use.
- When flushing showers, remove the shower head and lower the hose into the bath. If you're unable to remove the head, wrap it in a towel or facecloth to make sure there is no spray that you could inhale. Keep all shower heads and taps clean and free from a build-up of lime scale, mould or algae growth.



## Which benefits can you claim if you've lost your job?



### New-style Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)

If you have made enough Class 1 National Insurance Contributions (NICs) in the last 2 full tax years, you might be able to claim new-style Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA).

You can get this for up to 6 months and it will be paid into your bank, building society, or credit union account every 2 weeks. Your partner's or spouse's income will not affect your claim for new-style JSA. You can apply for new style JSA at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-style-jobseekers-allowance#how-to-claim>

### Universal Credit

If you are not eligible for the new style Jobseeker's Allowance and/or you require help with housing costs (rent), you may be eligible for Universal Credit.

Universal Credit is based on household income, so your partner's or spouse's income will affect how much you will get. If your capital is £16,000 or above, you will NOT qualify for universal credit.

You can check your entitlement at <https://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators>.

You can apply for Universal Credit at <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim>

If you are currently in receipt of Tax Credits/Housing Benefit/Income Support/Jobseekers Allowance-Income Based/Employment Support Allowance - Income Related and claim Universal Credit, all existing benefit payments will stop and be replaced by Universal Credit. If your Universal Credit claim is submitted and is then unsuccessful you will not be able to go back to claiming your previous benefits.

Note: if you claim Universal Credit before your last wage from your employer is received this income will be taken into account in the calculation of your Universal Credit entitlement.

### What benefits can you claim if your hours/income is reduced?

You may be entitled to Universal Credit if your income is reduced but please note, all of the above conditions apply.



For more information or assistance please contact Kevin McGhee, Income Maximisation Officer, [kevin@rsha.org.uk](mailto:kevin@rsha.org.uk), mobile **07464 543155**, or phone the office on **01786 841101**.



## Clothing Grant (children from Primary 1 to age 16 before 30th September 21)

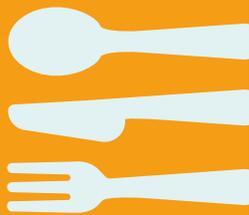
- Parents on Income Support, Employment Support Allowance, or Jobseeker's Allowance income based
- Parents in receipt of Child Tax Credits (but not Working Tax Credits alone) and earning less than £16,105 annual income.
- Parents in receipt of Child Tax Credits and Working Tax Credits earning less than £16,105 annual income
- Parents in receipt of Universal Credit

Applications for clothing grant **MUST** be made by **31.12.21**



## 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 alone) and less than £16,105 annual income
- Parents in receipt of Child Tax Credits and Working Tax Credits, earning less than £7,500 annual income
- Parents in receipt of Universal Credit, earning less than £610 per month.



Forms for both Clothing Grant and free School Meals available to complete online at <https://stirling.gov.uk/learning-education/schools/school-meals-uniforms/footwear-clothing-grant-school-meals/>

## 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. e.g. 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 18yrs and is no longer in education or is not employed, they can claim Universal Credit.

In some instances, if your child is under 18, 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 2021 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 2021 can be backdated to the beginning of term, otherwise claims will only be paid from date they are received.

Forms for Educational Maintenance Allowance available in July 21 to complete online at <https://stirling.gov.uk/learning-education/schools/school-meals-uniforms/education-maintenance-allowance-ema/>



## 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 within the last 12 months but no longer receive these, you **MUST** still complete the annual declaration information or you will be contacted by the DWP to inform you that you have received an overpayment for the Tax Credits you previously received.



# Staffing Changes

We say hello to Craig Wood, Director of Housing and Property Services who joined us in May 2021. Craig previously worked as Development Manager with Trust Housing Association in Edinburgh, and spent ten years working in housing for the City of Edinburgh Council.

Craig has had wide experience of the functions of local government and hopes this knowledge will be of benefit to tenants. Craig also has qualifications to degree level in town planning and urban design.



## Your Housing Officers

 All Housing Officers, are currently working from home during normal office hours and can be contacted by phone or email (see contact details below).

TELL US HOW WE CAN HELP YOU



### Gillian Lynas

Gillian works part time, all day Monday & Tuesday and till 1.00pm on Wednesday.

**Tel:** 01786 843034  
**Mob:** 07341 730601  
**Email:** gillian@rsha.org.uk



### Peter Davies

**Tel:** 01786 843031  
**Mob:** 07464 543154  
**Email:** peter@rsha.org.uk



### Rebekah Hawkins

Rebekah works part-time, from 1pm on Wednesdays, all day Thursday and Friday.

**Tel:** 01786 843034  
**Mob:** 07464 543158  
**Email:** rebekah@rsha.org.uk



### John Mallon

**Tel:** 01786 843035  
**Mob:** 07464 543157  
**Email:** john@rsha.org.uk

Doune and Kippen  
Estate visits will take place  
on the Second Thursday  
of the month (pm)

Callander and Deanston  
Estate visits will take place  
on the First Tuesday  
of the month (pm)

Gargunnoch, Balfron,  
Drymen, Strathblane  
and Killearn.  
Estate visits will take place  
on the Third Tuesday  
of the month (pm)

Aberfoyle, Kinlochard,  
Buchlyvie, Gartmore,  
Stronachlachar, Strathyre,  
Lochearnhead, Killin  
and Tyndrum.  
Estate visits will take place  
as follows; Aberfoyle,  
Kinlochard, Buchlyvie, Gartmore  
First Thurs of the month (am)  
Stronachlachar  
First Thursday (am) of every  
quarter starting 6th May  
Strathyre, Lochearnhead  
Third Thurs of the month (am)  
Killin, Tyndrum  
Third Thurs of the month (pm)

## Climate change, Flood risks, home contents insurance



**Climate Change is a serious issue and is now a theme in our business planning for the future.** Global warming leading to more rainfall has meant a higher risk of severe flooding from rivers bursting their banks. This poses a threat to some of our tenants

and we would urge all tenants to take out a home contents insurance policy to cover belongings. Such a policy will also cover you from damage caused by fire, theft or escape of water. You do not need to take out insurance for the building as RSHA covers this. We recommend using the company Thistle Tenant Risks ([www.thisletenants-scotland.co.uk](http://www.thisletenants-scotland.co.uk)). The Thistle Tenant Risks Home Contents Insurance Scheme is a specialist insurance scheme for social housing tenants living in Scotland.

**To find out more visit their website or speak to your Housing Officer.**

## Annual Garden Competition

This year we have three categories: **Best Individual Garden; Best Vegetable Garden** and **Best Communal or Shared Garden**. Planning around potential COVID restrictions, we have decided once again to ask entrants to send in photographs of their gardens. Please let us know if you need help with this as our Housing Officers can take some photos.



The closing date for entries is **Friday, 20th August 2021**. We are delighted that Bill Tait, who has over 30 years' experience in horticulture and judging garden competitions, will judge the competition for us. All prize winners will be published in the next issue of our Rural Matters newsletter.

To enter call the office/email [enquiries@rsha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsha.org.uk) or speak to a member of staff. Remember you can also nominate your neighbour's garden.

## **New Allpay phone number 0330 041 6497**

Allpay have changed the number for customers to make rent payments by phone. The 0330 number is lo-call cost number (equivalent to a standard rate call to a 01/02 number) and is included in the majority of telephone contracts. To make a rent payment via Allpay you will need an Allpay reference number and your debit card. The phone line is automated and is open 24/7.

[www.allpay.net](http://www.allpay.net)

## Good Neighbour Award Scheme: When good neighbours become good friends

**It's not too late to nominate a neighbour for our Good Neighbour Award scheme.**

Is there someone or a family whom you would particularly like to highlight for their "neighbourliness" and generosity of spirit which has helped you through a particularly difficult time or who is always there to help out?

### If so, we want to know.

We know that there are many people living in the rural Stirling area who deserve to be recognised for their thoughtfulness and consideration to their neighbours. We would like to give you the chance to pay tribute to someone special, either adult or young person, whose kindness has made a real difference to your lives or that of another neighbour.

### A good neighbour could be someone who:

- Looks after your home or pet when you are on holiday
- Puts out and brings your bin in
- Helps out with gardening and shopping
- Has been there when you needed someone to talk to
- Or someone who is simply a good neighbour all the time

### Terms and conditions:

- Either you and/or your "good neighbour" must be a Rural Stirling Tenant.
- Unfortunately, we can't accept nominations for a family member or someone living in the same property as you.
- We will write to you to let you know if your entry has been successful and we will also write to the "Good Neighbour" to let them know that they have been nominated.
- Rural Stirling will seek agreement from all parties before we use any details for publicity.

**The closing date for entries is Friday, 27th August 2021. To enter call the office or email us at [enquiries@rsha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsha.org.uk) or speak to your Housing Officer.**

**All nominees will receive a certificate. We will have one overall prize winner. All nominees will be published in the next edition of our Rural Matters newsletter.**



# Asset Management Update

## Gas Safety Inspections

As your Landlord, we are still legally required to carry out the annual gas safety inspection and service to all gas appliances in your home. We understand that you may be apprehensive to allow access for this to be undertaken due to the COVID-19 restrictions, however our Contractor's engineers will undertake this work by following all up to date government guidelines, wear the appropriate PPE and will social distance at all times. We appreciate your concerns however this is an essential utility inspection that we have to undertake within 12 months of your last inspection, and we would ask that you continue to allow access to Saltire in these difficult times.

## Kitchen Renewals

Everwarm continue with our Kitchen Installation Replacement Programme. Currently they are midway through the replacement of some kitchens in Killin and Deanston. They will be continuing the programme next financial year.

## External Landscaping

Over the summer months our landscape contractors, Nurture are attending sites twice a month through to October 2021. They will then over the winter months reduce to once a month between November and March, progressing those winter jobs to get the communal gardens ready for Spring such as pruning of shrubs and hedges, leaf collection, and litter picking etc.



# Stirling & District Women's Aid

**Stirling and District Women's Aid aims to offer support, information and temporary accommodation for women and their children who have been physically, emotionally or sexually abused by a partner or former partner.**

They provide refuge, information and support services for women, children and young people in the Stirlingshire area who are victims of domestic abuse.

**Coronavirus (Covid-19) - Stirling Aid are still open and will provide support and advice over telephone, email and facebook.**

[info@stirlingwomensaid.co.uk](mailto:info@stirlingwomensaid.co.uk)

01786 469518

[www.stirlingwomensaid.co.uk](http://www.stirlingwomensaid.co.uk)

# Fire Safety Upgrades

**RSHA also has a legal duty to ensure the electrical safety of your home. We are currently working with our Electrical Contractor, SS Testing to ensure that all of our properties are compliant with the new legal requirement to install an interlinked fire alarm system in your home. This applies to all properties in Scotland regardless of whether you own your home or rent your home.**

Our partner contractor SS Testing have bases in Scotland and England and all their contracts north of the border are serviced by the Scottish engineers. **We have managed to upgrade approximately 50% of our homes to date** so we have a big challenge ahead of us to meet the compliance deadline. There is no doubt that Covid 19 has played a big part in us not achieving a higher percentage and we understand your reluctance to let workmen into your home.

The Scottish Government has extended the compliance deadline from February 2021 to February 2022. The Scottish Government's proposed change in fire safety regulations came after much consultation following the Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2017 when 72 people died.

In Scotland during 2019-20 4,887 fires were reported in homes, resulting in 21 fatalities. (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Report)

**By February 2022, all homes should have:**

- **Smoke alarms installed in every circulation space on each storey of the dwelling, such as hallways and landings.**
- **Smoke alarms should be installed in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes.**
- **Heat alarms must be installed in every kitchen.**
- **All smoke alarms and heat alarms should be interlinked.**
- **Carbon monoxide alarms to be fitted where ever there is a fuel-burning appliance or flue.**

According to national fire statistics, dwelling fires in which a smoke alarm raised the alarm, continue to be discovered more rapidly (less than 5 minutes) after ignition. Smoke alarms also can be directly associated with lower fatality casualty rates.

SST have reported difficulty in getting access to tenant's homes, with people not responding to letters or answering phone calls. Please facilitate these works if SS Testing write or call you requesting access for these essential upgrades. We would much prefer to work with tenant's to gain access, but if we have been unable to arrange access, we will have to undertake forced entry to ensure that the legal requirements are met.



# Adaptations to Help You Continue to Live in Your Home

We recognise that a number of our tenants may require adaptations to their homes in order to provide an enhanced quality of life. Adaptations also allow you to continue to live more comfortably in your homes for as long as possible and they also help us to create stable, sustainable and inclusive communities.

Adaptations such as handrails, stair lifts, & wet rooms can make your home more accessible and usable. They allow tenants to cope with advancing age, disability or caring responsibilities, thereby enabling you to maximise your independence in your own home.

If you require your home to be adapted in any way, for example a handrail or ramp at the entrance to your home, a stair lift, or a shower unit in place of a bath, the Association can often do this through an Adaptation Grant Award from Scottish Government.

Your application to the Association for such an adaptation would require to be based on specialist written advice, usually that of an Occupational Therapist or your GP.

Funding for such adaptations is made annually and, as this may get used up quickly, sometimes requests have to be put on a waiting list until more funding is made available.

If you have difficulty in using or dealing with any areas of your home, or the fitments provided in it, please contact your Housing Officer who will advise you what you need to do to make an application to have your home adapted to suit your needs.



## We have launched our new video consulting service, Near Me.

Near Me is a video consulting service that enables people to attend appointments from home or wherever is convenient. The service is already widely used across NHS Scotland for healthcare appointments, with around 20,000 consultations being held every week.

All you need is a device for making video calls - like a smartphone - and an internet connection.

To access the waiting area you can visit our website [www.rsha.org.uk](http://www.rsha.org.uk) and click on the "Near Me" action button, located at the top of the home page.



- Follow the instructions.
- You will be placed in the waiting area.
- An RSHA staff member will answer your call.
- Alternatively, you can contact the office and a member of staff will send you a link.
- No data is stored. It is deleted at the end of the call.





## CCTV Use – What Do you Think?

Advances in technology have impacted all areas of our lives, not least the use of mobile recording devices, whether they be public or private. Large CCTV cameras are swiftly being replaced with doorbell and mobile CCTV devices. Many of these are unobtrusive and affordable. Usage has increased, making it impractical for us to deal with each individual person who may be using video monitoring equipment.

To ensure consistency and fairness we have included a draft statement about the use of CCTV in our Estate Management Policy as follows:

“The Association discourages and will not approve the installation and use of external viewing video equipment by tenants at their property. This includes CCTV camera systems, video doorbells and any other equipment, device or application that allows for external areas to a property to be viewed and / or monitored.

The Association will not actively monitor the installation and use of external viewing video equipment by tenants across its developments.

If the Association receives a complaint regarding such installation and use, the Association will direct complainants to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). “

The ICO is the UK’s independent authority set up to uphold information rights in the public interest. This means that they oversee and give advice on data protection, including the use of private recording equipment.

The ICO state, “if a system is set up to capture only images within the boundary of your private domestic property (meaning the boundary of the property where only you live), data protection laws do not apply.”

**If your system captures (any sound) or images outside the boundary of your home i.e. neighbours homes, gardens, shared spaces, public footpath or street, The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 laws apply and must be adhered to.**

The revised Estate Management Policy with the draft statement above, will be presented to our Board for approval in October. Before we do this, we would like to know what you think about the CCTV statement? If you have any comments, please email [enquiries@rsha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsha.org.uk) or telephone 01786 841101 and let us know.

# New development updates



## Burngreen, Phase 2, Kippen

After securing a full funding package for the proposed mixed tenure development at Burngreen Phase 2, Kippen work has commenced with Dawn Homes. RSHA will have 9 units for rent within the private development scheme

- 6 x 4apt Semi detached Houses
- 2 x 4apt End Terrace Houses
- 1 x 2apt Mid Terrace House

**The intention is to achieve a site completion for March 2022.**

## Plantation, Balmaha

Work continues with partners and contractor in order to achieve a site start this year. Project will provide 22 units (10 units Social Rent, 6 shared equity, 4 Key Worker units East Loch Lomond Community Trust (ELLCT) 2 self-build plots for sale.

## Lampson Road, Killearn

We are awaiting approval from the Planning Authority. Should planning permission be given, the project will move forward. The project will provide a further 11 homes for rent.

## Gartness Road, Drymen

We are currently awaiting the result of an adjudication relating to land value. This is expected in Autumn of this year with site start following should the outcome be positive.

## Buchanan Crescent, Croftamie

Scheme design continues with a Planning Application expected to be submitted in Autumn.

## Tyndrum

We are in the process of appointing designers and are in discussion with partners to explore opportunities in relation to tenures.



## Claish Farm, Callander

Lovell Partnerships Ltd are progressing well on site. Phase 1 completed in May 2021, phase 2 completed July 2021, and Phase 3 is planned for end of August. The site is scheduled to be fully complete this year.

# Condensation Advice

**This is the most common cause of dampness.**

**Condensation is caused by water moisture from inside the home coming into contact with a colder surface, such as a window or wall. The water drops (or condensation) may then soak into the wallpaper or paintwork or even plasterwork and attract black mould to grow on its surface. (You can wipe the black mould away using a special fungicidal solution or a solution of water and bleach.) (Please remember to be careful when using bleach and take appropriate safety precautions as guided by the manufacturer.)**

Condensation mainly occurs during the colder months and is usually found in corners and north facing walls, on or near windows, areas with little air circulation such as behind wardrobes and beds - especially when they are pushed up against external walls - black mould is frequently seen on this type of dampness.

It is very important to strike a balance between warmth and ventilation. It may appear that by opening windows that you are losing heat, but what you are actually doing is allowing warm moisture-laden air to escape and permitting cool dry air to enter your home. Dry cool air is actually cheaper to heat than warm moist air! So this actually saves you money, as well as resulting in a healthier living environment.

**Take preventative action** - If you feel the dampness and/or mould growth is caused by condensation:

## 1. Produce less moisture

- Cover pans when cooking.
- Dry clothes outdoors in warm weather.
- Ventilate tumble driers to the outside.
- Do not use paraffin or liquid petroleum ("bottled") gas heaters. They produce masses of water vapour and are very expensive to run.

## 2. Ventilate to remove moisture

- Always ventilate, or open a window when the kitchen and/or bathroom are in use and close other internal doors so as to prevent moisture-laden air from spreading to other parts of your home.
- Continue to ventilate for a time after a shower, a bath or cooking.
- Ventilate cupboards, wardrobes and (with blocked up fireplaces) chimney flues.
- Always open bedroom windows (for up to one hour) as soon as you rise, and throw back the sheets or duvets to air the bed and bedding.
- Clear window sills of clutter that will impede window opening.

## 3. Wipe away excess moisture

Always wipe the windows (and window sills if required) of your home, every morning, to remove condensation. This is especially important in the bedroom; just opening the window is not good enough.

## 4. Keep your home adequately heated

If possible, keep low background heat on all day, even in the bedrooms, kitchen and bathroom.

## 5. Above all remember dealing with condensation is not easy and automatically assume it has come inside their home from outside; it hasn't!

Only carrying out one or two of the above steps will not help your problem. You must do as many as possible every day, so that it becomes part of your living and lifestyle.

**If you still feel, having read this article, that your dampness is due to rising damp, penetrating damp or from defective plumbing then you should contact us.**

# Complaints Performance

Since April 1st we have followed the revised SPSO Complaints handling model and have adjusted the focus on complaint handling. Emphasis is on all staff being empowered to deal with complaints confidently and resolve issues quickly, ideally at point of contact. Training on complaints has been carried out to increase staff awareness, understanding and ownership of complaint handling. We also recognise the need to communicate with parties involved to avoid any additional stress.

**Learning from complaints helps us to improve our service and to identify areas where we are not performing so well. Where a quick resolution is not possible, we investigate the issue thoroughly aiming to give a full explanation and decision.**

During the first quarter (April to June 2021) we received 18 complaints. We also dealt with 4 that were received during March of the previous year. All complaints were responded to in line with SPSO timescales with an average of 5 working days for stage 1 complaints (target is 5 working days) and 18 working days for stage 2 complaints (target is 20 working days).

We dealt with six reactive repairs, four landscaping, five planned works, factoring, staff, void management, poor workmanship, housing allocation and 2 housing application complaints. In line with the new model handling process, we record complaints as resolved where the Association and the complainant have reached agreement and no further investigation is required.

We also use your feedback to help monitor contractor performance. Landscaping has received a disproportionately high level of complaints this time around and we have met with the landscaping contractor involved to agree/clarify expected standards and improve the level of service provided. This information helps us to improve communication with contractors and ensure we are providing the best possible service to our customers.

We have introduced a new reporting format to our Board which identifies the areas of our business where we receive complaints and where we do not. An indicator has also been added to show where our performance has improved/declined or remained the same since previous reporting periods. We have also introduced an action tracker to help keep tabs on any outstanding actions.

We have introduced a digital survey to make it easier to give us feedback on how satisfied you were with the repairs process. All responses are entered into a quarterly prize draw for a shopping voucher worth £30. We plan to introduce a feedback survey, later this year - similar in format to the repairs survey - to help us gauge customer satisfaction with our complaints service.

Details of complaints for the year 2020/21 will be published in the ARC return available to download from the SHR website normally in late August 2021. We will also publish details in our Annual Performance Report 2020/21 which is due out in September 2021. We will continue to give updates on our quarterly complaints performance in our Rural Matters Newsletters.



## There are several ways you can give us feedback:

- Use the website action box on the home page of the website [www.rsha.org.uk](http://www.rsha.org.uk)



- Email [enquiries@rsha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsha.org.uk)
- Phone the office 01786 841101 or
- Speak to a member of staff.
- Write to us.

**Quite simply, we value complaints as it helps us to improve. Thank you for your continued support.**

# Contact Details

Stirling Road, Doune, FK16 6AA

Tel: 01786 841101 [www.rsha.org.uk](http://www.rsha.org.uk) Email: [enquiries@rsha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsha.org.uk)

(Normal working hours are 9am - 5pm Mon to Thur and 9am - 4pm Fri)

Registered as a Scottish Charity No. SC037849.  
Rural Stirling Housing Association is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 No. 2376 (s)  
Registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator No. HAL232  
Property Factor No. PF000330  
Letting Agent Registration No's LARN 1907004 & LARN 1904083



**Rural Stirling**  
Housing Association