



CEO Update

Hello and welcome to our Summer Edition of Rural Matters. I hope you will find this edition interesting and informative. If you feel we can improve our newsletter or you have any suggestions for articles

in future editions please let us know. Since our last edition work on our Doune office has progressed and is now reaching completion. We hope to have moved back by the end of August and will keep you informed every step of the way so that our doors are kept open to all our customers even at that busy time! I am delighted to inform all our readers that we have a new member of our team. We have appointed a Modern Apprentice Josh Graham who will join our Finance and Corporate Services Team towards the end of July. This is a fantastic opportunity for Josh and we welcome him on board. Talking of which, would you be interested in joining our Board?

We are currently recruiting new members. Further details about this opportunity are on page 2 and can be found by visiting our website www.rsha.org.uk. The Board vacancies are being advertised in local publications. If you would like any more information or wish to apply, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Our Board have also been busy, the May meeting covered a presentation on the new SHR Regulatory Framework, Quarterly Performance Reports, and a tender for new loan finance. In June, the meeting looked at the first draft of the Annual Assurance Statement, Financial Returns that we must make to the SHR, arrangements for our annual Board appraisal review meetings and a review of our policy on Anti-Social Behaviour. The new Working Groups that were set up have been working very hard to take forward proposals for our new Strategic Plan and development of our Customer Engagement Strategy. I hope this gives an indication of the diverse range of issues that our Board are responsible for. Becoming a Board member can be a rewarding role.

Development Update

Lampson Road, Killearn: A site in Lampson Road was acquired by the association at the end of March. We are now progressing a feasibility study and carrying out local consultation regarding the potential of the site for 12 new affordable homes.

Springbank Road, Doune (Phase 5): Construction on 6 new homes commenced in January 2019 and is progressing well. Due for completion in October 2019.

Balmaha: This project will deliver 22 new homes including 10 homes for rent, 6 for Shared Equity, 4 key worker homes and 2 self-build plots. We hope to be in a position to issue tenders later this summer and start on site late summer/early Autumn.

Claish Farm, Callander: The planning application for 50 new affordable homes was submitted to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park at the end of March and we are hoping for approval in July. Funding approval for the project has now been received from the Scottish Government.



Springbank Road, Doune



In This Issue

-  Board of Management recruitment
-  Changes to your tenancy rights
-  New Allocations & ASB Policies
-  Planned maintenance update
-  Housing Officer update
-  Best Start Grant Scotland
-  Freedom of Information
-  Annual garden competition 2019

Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) New Regulatory Framework

As we reported in our last edition the SHR has introduced a new Regulatory Framework. The new Regulatory Framework has brought about some important changes that we told you about. You can find details of our Engagement Plan with the SHR on our website www.rsha.org.uk and also by visiting the website of the SHR www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk. We are now working on the Annual Assurance Statement that we will submit to the SHR at the end of October. We will make the Annual Assurance Statement available to all our tenants. This statement will give you and the SHR reassurance that we are carrying out our business appropriately and meeting the standards of Governance and Financial Management that the Regulator expects.



Our Board of Management Needs You!

Would you be interested in joining our Board?

We are an ambitious, forward-thinking organisation, committed to providing quality, affordable homes throughout the north and west rural Stirling Council area. A large part of our area of operation falls within the boundary of Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park.

Our vision and reason for being is to put our communities at the heart of everything we do.

'Building affordable homes: growing rural communities' is our strapline.

We are already on target to deliver circa **200 new homes by 2023/24** and are currently exploring the potential of our subsidiary to increase our wider community impact. This is a great time to join our Board as we are embarking on developing our new strategic plan to start in 2020.

We are looking for new Board members to sit on our parent company Board. This role offers you the opportunity to lead on the strategic direction of a growing organisation, playing a key role in delivering high quality services to our customers, defining goals and targets and working with our involved customers to scrutinise our performance. Whilst we would welcome applications from a wide and diverse range of individuals, we would particularly be interested in hearing from those who:

WE NEED YOU

- **share our values and the values of the social housing sector**
- **have a genuine commitment to strengthening our local communities**
- **have specific experience of being a social housing tenant, financial and risk management, asset management or development**

- **have the confidence and ability to question and challenge effectively**
- **have a good understanding of governance and the roles and responsibilities of being a board member**

The role requires a considerable time commitment, attending Board meetings (held seven times a year) preparation for meetings, attending strategy days and training sessions. We value commitment and experience as much as qualifications and offer a full induction programme and ongoing support to all our Board members to help them in this challenging and rewarding role.

Board membership is a voluntary position and non-remunerated however reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

If you are interested in this opportunity please visit our website or contact us on **01786 841101** or email enquiries@rsha.org.uk to have an informal chat or to request a copy of our Recruitment Pack.

Closing Date
12 noon on Friday 2nd August



Changes to your Scottish Secure Tenancy Rights Applications for Joint tenancy/ assignment/subletting/succession

A reminder to let you know how your tenancy conditions will change.

New notification and residency requirements for joint tenancy, assignment, subletting and succession applications will apply from 1st November 2019.



Members of your household (including children and carers) will be subject to a new 12-month qualifying period in connection with these changes. **The qualifying period will only begin once we have received notification from you in writing that they are living in the property.**

It is important that you let us know in writing as soon as possible if there have been changes to the people living in your home.

New Allocations Policy

You may recall being asked for your feedback on proposed changes to our Allocations Policy in the Spring edition of Rural Matters. Thank you to all those who responded. **Our new Allocations Policy was introduced on 1st June.** You can read or download a copy on our website www.rsha.org.uk

We will be publishing a report on the consultation and review of the policy and would like to know how you would like us to do this.

Please take a few moments to complete our short survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/X6LF9TL> the link is available on the front page of our website. You can also complete the survey by scanning the QR code below.

Please complete the survey by Friday 16th August.



Service Provision – What happens when it goes wrong ?

During the year 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 we received 52 complaints.

Of these complaints 42 were stage 1 complaints and 10 were stage 2 complaints.

A Stage 1 complaint is a fairly straightforward complaint. This type of complaint can usually be resolved within 5 working days. For example, a repair wasn't carried out within time limits set by us.

A Stage 2 complaint is more complicated and usually requires more investigation into what went wrong and has a target resolution time of 20 working days.

As a regulated services landlord we report these figures to the Scottish Housing Regulator as part of our Annual Charter Return.

Whilst we hope you do not need to complain, we value the complaints we receive and use them to improve our performance.

We do this by investigating any complaint internally and discussing outcomes such as lessons learned which we then translate into actions such as changing procedures, policies and training needs for staff.

The majority of Stage 1 complaints (19 in total), relate to our reactive repairs service. We contract out all our repairs to contractors who form a "Framework Service". At times these complaints are complicated, and we need to discuss the detail with both the tenant and contractor to find out what went wrong.

Repairs Satisfaction survey

As a means of monitoring performance of our contractors we invite all tenants to complete a repair satisfaction survey once the repair is completed.

Please complete the survey as it helps us monitor the performance of our contractors and lets us know when things go wrong as well as when things go well.

Help us to improve and provide feedback when things go right or wrong!

Every quarter we have a prize draw and pick a winner from the returned questionnaires. The lucky recipient will receive a £25 shopping voucher.

See page 6 for this quarter's winner.

New Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbour Nuisance Policy

Our new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy was introduced on 1st July. You can read or download a copy of the Policy from our website.

Thanks to all those who gave feedback on the proposed changes at the Tenants Forum in March, your feedback was very helpful.

The new Policy has made changes to timescales for resolving anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance cases as set out below.

Serious ASB

Immediate risk and criminal content - drug dealing, unprovoked assault, violence including domestic violence, harassment, hate crime

Initial Contact with Customer
1 Day

Resolution Time for Casework
2 months



Urgent ASB

Urgent risk - threatening or abusive behaviour, frequent serious disturbance and noise, vandalism and damage to RSHA property, personal attacks on social media towards our tenants and staff

Initial Contact with Customer
3 Days

Resolution Time for Casework
1 month



Neighbour Nuisance

Breach of tenancy conditions including occasional noise, family disputes affecting neighbours, dog/pet control, behaviour of visitors or children, infrequent disturbance. This category will also include complaints about stair/bin cleaning, fly tipping, garden upkeep and litter.

Initial Contact with Customer
5 Days

Resolution Time for Casework
15 working days



The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced additional legal powers to enable landlords to deal with those who undertake or have undertaken ASB or have criminal convictions.

This could result in eviction or the conversion of a secure tenancy to a short tenancy. The new policy reflects the new legal framework.



Planned Maintenance Update

Here is a reminder of the works programmed to be carried out this year:



Kitchen Renewals

- Craigmores View, Aberfoyle
- Old Kirk Loan, Aberfoyle
- Donaldson Way, Balfron
- Lochard Cottages, Kinlochard

We anticipate that the kitchens will be tendered over the **next 2-3 months**, a contractor will then be awarded the contract and works will commence shortly thereafter. Letters will be issued to the tenants involved when the contractor is known and further details regarding the timing and nature of the works will also be issued at that time.



Electric Heating Renewals

- Montgomery Place (18, 24-40, 29, 31, 41 & 43), Buchlyvie

We are currently investigating options as to the type of replacement heating best suited to these properties and once this has been concluded, we will tender the works and then write to all tenants involved to advise regarding timescales and the nature of the works.



Fire Safety Upgrades

The first phase of these works will be carried out across various developments where we require to bring properties up to the new fire safety standards. We are currently assessing the information

returned from recent planned electrical inspections and this will dictate the upgrading required per development. We will then tender these works which are all due for completion by February 2021.



Gas Servicing & Maintenance Contract

The above contract was recently tendered for the following 3 to 4 years. We are pleased to announce that Saltire Facilities Management was again the successful contractor and we look forward to Saltire continuing to serve the Association well in this critical area of health and safety.

If you are approached by Saltire, requesting access to carry out the annual servicing of your gas appliances, then your cooperation will be very much appreciated. Please remember, that if you fail to provide access we will have no alternative but to cap your gas supply as we cannot legally go beyond the anniversary of the previous gas service without having checked and serviced the appliances. You may also be charged for any additional costs incurred through un-capping the gas supply and completing the service.

The return to Doune

The office improvements currently being carried out to the Doune office are progressing well but it will be completed a little later than first envisaged. We are now anticipating moving back into the office during the last week in August if all goes according to the latest review of the programme.



We are pleased how the new layout is looking and are keen to welcome all visitors to the new surroundings and facilities the office will offer. In addition to the improved reception, waiting and interview areas, there will also be improved disabled access through the installation of a platform lift that will allow visitors simpler access to meeting and toilet facilities.



More to follow as renovations progress.



Rural Stirling
Housing Association

Prize Draw Repair satisfaction surveys



Congratulations to this quarter's winner of our repair's satisfaction survey, reply prize draw.

A £25 Marks and Spencer voucher was presented to Monica McGuire from Deanston by Molly, our temporary work experience receptionist.

Satisfaction surveys are very important to us. They enable us to monitor performance and see where we can make changes to improve service delivery.

Please keep them coming in.



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 (temp)

Peter works part time, from 1.00pm on Wednesday and all day Thursday & Friday

Tel: 01786 843034
Mob: 07464 543154
Email: peter@rsha.org.uk



Kelly Cadden

Tel: 01786 843031
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Email: kelly@rsha.org.uk



Andrew Robinson

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

Your Housing Officers

Angela Cameron, our Housing Officer for Buchlyvie, Aberfoyle and Gartmore, retired at the end of April this year. Peter Davies is our temporary Housing Officer for the area and will be with us until a permanent Housing Officer is recruited. We will let you know when a new Housing Officer is in post.

Buchlyvie, Aberfoyle, Kinlochard, Stronachlachar and Gartmore
Estate visits will take place on the 2nd Thurs (pm) of each month

Gargunnoch, Balfron, Drymen, Strathblane and Killearn.
Estate visits will take place on the 3rd Tues (pm) of each month

Deanston, Doune, Lochearnhead, Killin, Tyndrum and Strathyre.
Estate visits will take place as follows; Doune /Deanston - 3rd Monday (am), Strathyre / Lochearnhead (pm). Killin - 3rd Thurs of each month (am), Tyndrum (pm).

Callander & Kippen
Estate visits will take place on the 2nd Tues (pm) of each month

Best Start Grant Scotland

The Best Start Grant is a package of three payments for parents & carers during the early years of a child's life.

The Grant consists of:

Pregnancy and Baby Payment

The Pregnancy and Baby Payment replaces and expands on the UK Government's Sure Start Maternity Grant by:

- providing eligible families with **£600** on the birth of their first child and **£300** on the birth of any subsequent children
- there is no limit on the number of children that are supported
- the application window is extended from 24 weeks pregnant to 6 months after the birth, giving clients longer to apply

Early Learning Payment

- The Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment is a new **£250** payment to help with the costs of early learning when a child is between 2 and 3 years old.
- Social Security Scotland began taking applications on **Monday 29 April 2019**.

School Age Payment

- The Best Start Grant School Age Payment is a new **£250** payment to help with the costs of preparing for school around the time a child might start Primary 1.
- Social Security Scotland began taking applications from **Monday 3 June 2019**.

You can apply by freephone on **0800 182 2222** or online at <https://www.mygov.scot/>



How our Income Maximisation Officer can help you

Our Income Maximisation Officer, **Kevin McGhee**, wants to make sure you're getting the financial support you are entitled to.

Here's how some of our tenants have been helped by Kevin.

I was homeless and because I was suffering from mental health problems at the time, did not claim any benefits. I managed to secure a tenancy and Kevin helped me to complete a UC claim online. He recognised that I was also exempt from paying Council Tax. I am now in receipt of £255.75 per week which has eased a lot of pressure for me and I now feel I can make a fresh start.

I had to give up my job due to health reasons, I was already claiming UC. Kevin told me about Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and helped me complete the form. I was entitled to enhanced rate daily living and standard rate mobility which is worth £110.85 per week. This has helped me through this difficult time.

Dates for your diary

Wednesday 18th September is Scottish Housing Day. We will be hosting a fundraising coffee morning and collecting donations for Start Up Stirling Foodbank in our new look office.....watch out for further details.



Remember our AGM will be held on Thursday 19th September this year we hope to have our AGM in Doune and have our refurbished office open for viewing - details to follow to all our members.

RSHA Tenant Satisfaction Survey with



Results are in and we will be bringing you an update on this as part of our **Annual Performance Report**. All tenants will receive a copy in September. Thank you to everyone who took part.

RSHA Garden Competition 2019



Our judge for many years, Bill Tait will once again be travelling around Rural Stirling area to judge garden competition entries.



Categories this year are:

- Best individual garden
- Best Shared or Communal Garden
- Best vegetable garden.

Prize winners will be invited to our AGM held in September to receive their prizes. Why not enter your garden this year and win a prize.

Judging will take place on Friday, 9th August. Closing dates for entries is Friday 26th July.



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

Bill knows what to look for after a long and varied career in horticulture and is an experienced judge having for the last 30 years presided over the Best Kept War Memorials garden competition on behalf of the Royal British Legion.

Looking for a few pointers?

Whether you have containers/hanging baskets/borders and lawns Bill will be looking for gardens that provide: initial impact and colour; well-presented gardens; balance and symmetry of displays; maintenance of paths, structures, lawns and fences; health and vigour of plants used and freedom from perennial weeds!

Freedom of information to apply to registered social landlords

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.

Contact Details

Lomond Court, Castle Business Park, Stirling, FK9 4TU.

Our offices in Doune are undergoing a refurbishment and we expect to return to Doune at the end of August 2019.

Tel: 01786 841101 www.rsha.org.uk Email: enquiries@rsha.org.uk

If you have an emergency repair when the office is closed (Normal working hours are 9am - 5pm Mon to Thur and 9am - 4pm Fri) please call Saltire on 0330 202 0444 for all Gas Heating & Hot water repairs and The McDougall Group on 0333 123 1011 for all other emergencies.



Rural Stirling
Housing Association

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