

## Welcome to the Autumn Edition



I hope you are well, and welcome to our Autumn edition of Rural Matters. It's been another very busy period for RSHA with lots going on.

We were delighted to help Scotland celebrate Scottish Housing Day on 18th September 2024. The theme this year was Ageing Well in Scotland. Scotland is ageing faster than the rest of the UK population and this is even faster in rural Scotland. We attended an event hosted by the Chartered Institute of Housing and Stirling University and heard from a range of speakers about what needs to be done to address this challenge.

In this edition we will be sharing with you our latest news updates and information on upcoming events.

Please remember that our team is here to support you. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, don't hesitate to reach out. Your feedback is invaluable, and we are always eager to hear from you.

Thank you once again for being a part of our community. I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events and wish you a safe, happy, and enjoyable autumn.

Warm regards,  
Donna Birrell, CEO



## Landscape Maintenance

Our landscaper Nurture continues with the annual programme of regular maintenance visits to cut grass and undertake landscaping works at communal areas across our developments.

Due to our wide ranging geography, we require the assistance of tenants across all of our sites to monitor the upkeep of our communal areas and to allow us to act quickly when urgent action is required. To assist with this, we have landscape representatives who report any issues to our Property Services Team.

If you would be interested in helping us in this way, and becoming a landscape rep, please contact your Housing Services Officer.



## Rents and Service Charges Review 2024

We aim to ensure that all tenants and residents feel that they receive good value for money from us. We will soon be asking all of you for your thoughts on our Rent and Service Charges as we are in the process of reviewing our current model. The aim is to continue to ensure that our rents and service charges are fair, transparent, and affordable for everyone.

There will be various opportunities for you to have your say, including paper and digital surveys. We will be carrying out a survey which will go live from next week and remain open for **3 weeks until the 28 October**. We will also be holding **three separate focus group meetings on 6 November from 10am-12noon in Aberfoyle, 2-4pm in Callander and 6-8pm in Doune**. Venue and other details will be confirmed very soon. At the above meetings we will be letting you know more about the results of the survey, our plans and what this could mean for rents and service charges. Please look out for the survey and take part in the consultation as it is important that we hear the views of as many tenants and residents as possible.

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# BOARD NEWS

## Board Recruitment

The May, June and August Board meetings were very full meetings where lots of key decisions and discussions took place. Key agenda items included:

- **ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:** The Board approved the Annual Financial Statements for the year to 31 March 2024, Audit Summary Report and Letter of Representation which were presented to members at our AGM.
- **QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE:** The Board was presented with the Quarter 4 (January - February - March 2024) and Quarter 1 (April - May - June 2024) Quarterly Performance Reports. Our Board continues to monitor performance closely and we continue to prioritise and focus on arrears performance, which has seen some improvement.
- **ARC RETURN 2024:** The Board approved our Annual Return on the Charter to the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- **POLICIES:** Various policies were reviewed and approved in May, June and August.
- Our Board will next meet in October.

We are currently recruiting new Board members We welcome applications to join our Board from all, however we would be particularly interested in hearing from young people and those who;

- share our aims and the values of the social housing sector.
- have a genuine commitment to strengthening our local communities.
- have specific experience of health and safety, equalities and human rights, being a social housing tenant, or digital strategy 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.

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

## Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)

Each year we submit an Annual Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter referred to as the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). A Landlord Report is published by the SHR following submission of our ARC return and lets you know how well we are performing compared to other Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Our Landlord Report is available [SHR Landlord Report 2024](#) and you can also view on our website.

## Annual Assurance Statement 2024



We would like to involve our tenants and get your feedback on our next Annual Assurance Statement due to be submitted at the end of October 2024. This is a statement that must be provided by all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to the SHR and confirms how we are complying with the SHR Standards of Governance and Financial Management.

**Would you be willing to give us feedback on our Annual Assurance Statement?**

**If this is of interest to you, please contact us.**

## Our 34th AGM was held on Thursday, 12th September 2024 in the Callander Youth Project Trust.

We were very pleased to see so many of you at the AGM and had a very interesting presentation from Stephen Clark, Head of Housing at Stirling Council on the Housing Emergency. Our Chair Mark Griffiths stood down after serving 5 years in the role. Well done to Mark for being such an excellent Chair! Fiona Boath, who has served as Vice Chair and been on the Board for a number of years has been elected to serve as Chair.

## Near Me

Please remember we can offer the **Near Me** appointment system for routine appointments. This is a virtual meeting room that can be easily accessed and saves time and expense of coming to our office or having a member of staff visit you in your own home. Details of how to use Near Me can be found on our website.



# Fiona Boath (Mitchell) elected RSHA Chairperson September 2024

Rural Stirling Housing Association (RSHA) is proud to announce the appointment of our new Chairperson Fiona Boath, a long-standing resident of Killin and member of the local community.

**RSHA first came into Fiona's life in 2004, when she was allocated a flat in the newly built development at Fingal Road, Killin: a village where she has lived all her life.**

After attending a couple of the Association's AGMs, she decided to apply to become a Board Member. She felt the Association should be aware of just how important it was to have affordable homes in the rural areas, where young people have the opportunity to stay, live and work in the place they grew up - should they desire to do so.



In November 2006, Fiona was co-opted onto the Board. At the time she was the youngest person sitting round the table, and a voice for the tenants. (Although she admits she took a while to find that voice.)

Fiona remained an RSHA tenant until 2009, when due to family circumstances she moved to a Local Authority house. Fiona decided that even though she was no longer a tenant of RSHA, she could still use her tenant experience to be an independent tenant voice on the Board.

In late 2010, Fiona completed an SQA Governance of Scottish Housing Association Certificate; CIH Level 2 Housing Practice (3) Modules during 2019; and completed an ILM EVH Governing Body Leadership Programme in November 2021.

In her time on the Board, Fiona has served with 4 chairpersons: Jim Milne, Owen McKee, Margaret Vass and Mark Griffiths and two CEOs Tony Teasdale and Donna Birrell, and has held the position of: Secretary; Convenor of the

Governance Working Group; Chair of Audit & Risk Committee; and Co-Vice Chair.

Being a Board Member has certainly evolved since Fiona first sat round the Board table upstairs in the RSHA office, Stirling Road, Doune prior to the office redevelopment.

During this time, as a parent to two young boys she volunteered in pre-school groups and scouting within the local community. Fiona's volunteering started long before becoming a parent, however, and before leaving McLaren High School she started as a young leader/ assistant Guider in the local Brownies pack, continuing until 2014.

Vibrant, sustainable local communities for young, old and everything in between is a huge reason as to why Fiona has continued serving on the RSHA Board of Management.

Fiona admits she is not a housing professional, a financial expert, in fact does not refer to herself as professional in any sense of the word... what she does say is ... she

has 50 years lived experience of living in homes within the social housing sector: 24 of those years having tenancies in the private rented sector, Housing Association and Local Authority.

**We are currently looking for new Members to join the Association. If you are interested, please email us at [enquiries@rsha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsha.org.uk), or call the office 01786 841101. Life Membership is open to everyone who supports our objectives, in accordance with our Membership Policy, and on payment of £1. As a Member of the Association, you can:**

- Take part in our AGM.
- Elect members of the Board.
- Stand for election to the Board.
- Receive regular newsletters and other information about the work of the Association.

**If you are interested in becoming a Member, please contact us for further information.**

## Home Contents Insurance ...don't forget your house contents insurance!

If the worst happens and your home is affected by burst pipes, flood or fire we would carry out the necessary repairs to make your home fit to live in again. This would be covered by our buildings insurance. This insurance does NOT cover your belongings, your furniture, your carpets or redecoration. We strongly recommend you take out home contents insurance - this costs less than you might think. You can get cover of £10,000 for less than £30 a year.

**You can choose any provider, but two specialist social housing providers are:**

The Diamond Insurance offered by Thistle Tenant Risks Home Contents Insurance Scheme - a specialist insurance scheme for social housing tenants [www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk](http://www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk)

Tenants' Content Insurance, further information can be obtained from [tcischemes@marsh.com](mailto:tcischemes@marsh.com)

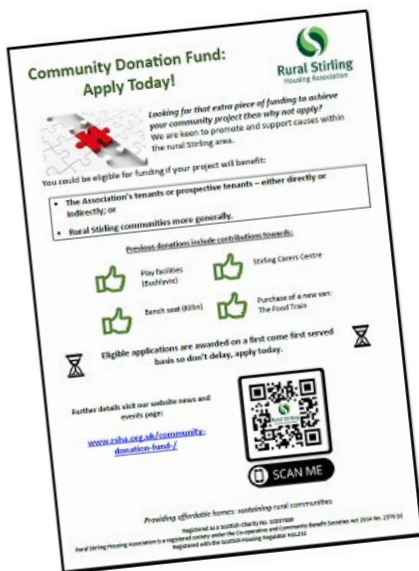
**For more general information about home insurance visit the Citizen's Advice Bureau Scotland website [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/consumer/insurance/types-of-insurance/household-contents-insurance/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/consumer/insurance/types-of-insurance/household-contents-insurance/)**



# Getting Out and About

During the summer months we would normally be out and about attending Gala Days etc.

However, at a recent Tenant Gathering you told us that there was more value in our staff being represented at Community Hubs where other agencies are represented such as Citizens Advice. We have responded to your feedback and are holding regular Housing Surgeries as part of these events. We do still continue to support community events such as Gala Days and Highland Games through our Community Donation Fund.



# Community Donation Fund

You may have seen some adverts for our fund in your local community newsletter. We still have some funds available from this year's allocation and would welcome applications.

The minimum donation is £100. If you are involved in a community project and are seeking funding perhaps we can help.

Contact us by email [enquiries@rsha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsha.org.uk) or go on our website for further information about how to apply. [www.rsha.org.uk/community-donation-fund/](http://www.rsha.org.uk/community-donation-fund/)

# Staff Away Day Serious Games

This year the staff team spent an enjoyable day doing some teambuilding at Stirling University where they played a Serious Game. The Serious Game provided an opportunity for our team to creatively explore housing problems together and produce solutions for an imaginary community known as Hopetown.

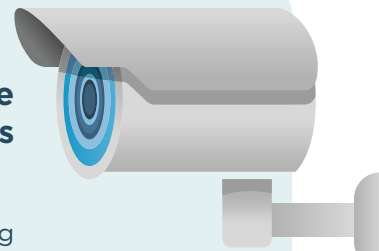
Would you like to play Hopetown? There will be a session for community members on Saturday, 19th October between 10am and 4pm at the University of Stirling.

To book your place please visit: [Book session for Hopetown.](#)



# CCTV

There has recently been an increase in calls to RSHA regarding neighbours installing video equipment (CCTV).



The use of video equipment is not a housing management issue; however, we are aware that this may cause significant distress to you and other neighbours.

If the system captures images of people outside the boundary of their private domestic property (including shared spaces) then the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 will apply.

However, we cannot take action relating to the installation of video equipment as it is dealt with by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). If you feel that your neighbour is failing to comply with the obligations listed in the ICO's guidance, then you should contact the ICO or Police Scotland directly to report it.

You can find this guidance on the ICO's website: [www.ico.org.uk/for-the-public/domestic-cctv-systems/](http://www.ico.org.uk/for-the-public/domestic-cctv-systems/)

# Annual Tenancy Visits

If you have not had an Annual Tenancy Visit in 2024, your Housing Services Officer will be in contact with you to arrange this. You can contact your Housing Services Officer directly if you have any questions regarding this visit.

The aim of our Annual Tenancy Visit is for our Housing Services Officer to have a friendly chat with you, and to check your tenancy and contact information is up to date as well as to identify any issues, such as, the condition of your home or if you have outstanding repairs.

# What a Washout Summer!

It wasn't much of a summer was it? There was so much rain with dry days few and far between. Unfortunately, the unsettled, unseasonable weather is a stark reminder of the devastating impacts of climate change.

This has an immediate impact on communities across rural Stirling with many areas being at risk of flooding, which can be particularly sudden in warmer weather as the combination of intense downpours and dry hard ground can lead to flash floods. Please familiarise yourself with flood information that can be found on the Council's website. In the event of a flood at any of our homes, RSHA will look to assist tenants where possible and will liaise with emergency services to ensure vulnerable tenants are prioritised.

For more information on Climate Change please visit [www.netzeronation.scot/about/campaigns/climate-emergency](http://www.netzeronation.scot/about/campaigns/climate-emergency)



## Condensation Advice

This is the most common cause of dampness.

Moving into autumn is a good time to start thinking ahead to the impact that cooler temperatures can have on our homes and the actions you can take to prevent moisture related issues occurring such as surface mould resulting from condensation.

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 this actually allows warm moisture-laden air to escape and permits 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:**



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. 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.

### 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.



### 4. KEEP YOUR HOME ADEQUATELY HEATED IF POSSIBLE

- Keep low background heat on all day, even in the bedrooms, kitchen and bathroom.

### 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 blocked up fireplaces.
- 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 enough.



### 5. ABOVE ALL REMEMBER DEALING WITH CONDENSATION IS NOT EASY!

- Carrying out as many of the above steps as often as possible will help to reduce condensation in your home.
- Please do not hesitate to contact us about condensation issues in your home. We are here to help. If you feel that your dampness is due to rising damp, penetrating damp or from a repair issue then please contact us.

# Your Housing Services Officers

TELL US HOW WE  
CAN HELP YOU



**Dana McNulty**

Email: [dana@rsha.org.uk](mailto:dana@rsha.org.uk)

Mobile: 07881 799570

Office: 01786 843035



**Lesley McGregor**

Email: [Lesley@rsha.org.uk](mailto:Lesley@rsha.org.uk)

Mobile: 07464 543154

Office: 01786 843031



**Rebekah Hawkins**

(Rebekah works part-time,  
Monday, Tuesday and  
11am-3pm on Wednesday)

Email: [Rebekah@rsha.org.uk](mailto:Rebekah@rsha.org.uk)

Mobile: 07881 799576

Office: 01786 843034

## WALKABOUT SCHEDULE

Callander & Doune

**First Tuesday of the month  
(am) - Doune**

**Second Tuesday of the month  
(am) - Callander: Finlay Road,  
Duncan Drive**

**Third Tuesday of the month (am)**

**- Callander: McLaren Terrace,  
Finglas Gardens, Ritchie Place**

**Fourth Tuesday of the month  
(am) - Callander: Station Road,  
Buchanan Place, Stirling Road,  
Campbell Court**

## WALKABOUT SCHEDULE

Tyndrum, Killin, Lochearnhead,  
Gartmore, Buchlyvie, Strathyre,  
Kippen, Gargunnoch & Deanston

**First Thursday of the month:  
Gargunnoch (am),  
Buchlyvie (am), Gartmore (pm)**

**Second Tuesday of the month  
(am) Kippen & Deanston**

**Third Thursday of the month:  
Strathyre, Lochearnhead, Killin  
and Tyndrum**

## WALKABOUT SCHEDULE

Aberfoyle, Balforn, Drymen,  
Killearn, Kinlochard, Strathblane,  
& Stronachlachar

**First Tuesday of every month -  
Aberfoyle, and Drymen**

**Second Tuesday of every month -  
Balforn, Killearn and Strathblane**

**Quarterly visits - Kinlochard,  
Stronachlachar**

## Keeping of Pets

**RSHA allow tenants to have one cat, one dog or one caged bird or animal.** Any additional pets are at the discretion of the housing association, and you must obtain our prior written permission if you wish to keep any more than one.

You have the right to keep a pet subject to the conditions listed in section 2.6 of your tenancy agreement. If we give written permission and you fail to meet the conditions, permission to continue to keep the pet may be withdrawn.

## Tenant Scrutiny Group

A joint tenant scrutiny group with Forth Housing Association tenants, was established last year. Guided and assisted by the Tenant's Information Service (TIS), the group scrutinised the annual performance information we sent to the Scottish Housing Regulator for 2022/23.

The group will be scrutinising other areas of our service this year and would be delighted for more of our tenants to join them. TIS will be leading the scrutiny of the areas of our service (yet to be) decided. This will involve looking at best practice examples and recommendations for improvement.

**Please contact Joe Salcedas, Housing Services Adviser email [enquiries@rsha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsha.org.uk) or phone 01786 841101 if you think you would like to take part.**





# Complaints Performance

April to June 2024

Total number of complaints received

17

Types of complaints:

10

were Stage 1 complaints

7

were Stage 2 complaints

## COMPLAINT OUTCOMES

85%

85% of Stage 1 complaints were resolved within the SPSO timescales

The Chart below provides a comparison between the current reporting year and 2023-24 for the number of complaints received during April to June.

100%

100% of Stage 2 complaints were resolved within SPSO targets.

17

Q1 2024/25

24

Q1 2023-24

## LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

We use the complaints we receive to review our processes and learn from them. Below are examples of the themes and learning identified from Quarter 1 complaints.

**Description** - Defect complaints at The Meadows, Kippen

**Learning Outcome/Action Taken** - New build developers to have better communication with tenants during the defects to attend quickly.

**Description** - Direct Debit not increased following rent increase

**Learning Outcome/Action Taken** - Additional checks to be introduced to ensure Direct Debits increased following rent increase

**Description** - Complaint about interaction with staff member and a Next of Kin at the office following death of tenant and inaccurate handling of utility account by RSHA.

**Learning Outcome/Action Taken** - Void energy management service process for closing account on death of tenant to be reviewed and training for housing team. Improved communication between teams when occupant dies to raise awareness of need to be sensitive when dealing with relatives handing back keys etc.

## COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

Quarter 1 complaints that have been fully responded to had the following outcomes

### STAGE 1

Q1 2024/25

Q1 2023/24

Upheld -	53.85%	46.67%
Partially Upheld	23.08%	15.56%
Not Upheld	23.08%	37.78%
Resolved	0.00%	N/A

### STAGE 2

Q1 2024/25

Q1 2023/24

Upheld -	20%	30%
Partially Upheld	20%	30%
Not Upheld	0%	40%
Resolved	60%	N/A

The average length of time to resolve Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints for the quarter with a comparison of 2023/24 quarter 1 results.

The average number of working days it took to resolve complaints at each Stage was as follows:

Stage 1 complaints average of  
**4 working days - Q1 2024/25**  
4.56 working days - Q1 2023/24

Stage 2 complaints average of  
**18.40 working days - Q1 2024/25**  
20.58 working days - Q1 2023/24

## COMPLIMENTS

Throughout the year we received some really nice compliments from our customers to thank us and our contractors for our help and support and services. Below are a couple of those that we have received recently.

“An applicant called in to cancel their housing application with us as they had managed to find somewhere else to live privately. Although the applicant has ended up not living in one of our properties, the person said that at 80 years old they were very scared at the thought of being homeless when their previous home was being sold by the landlord, and that the help of RSHA during the application process (especially from Joe Salcedas, our Housing Services Adviser whom she called a superstar!) was very reassuring and helped them stay positive. The former applicant said they had no idea where to start and that Joe had given all the information they needed in one place that was easy to understand.”

“The service provided today was absolutely wonderful. My garden has never looked so neat and tidy, and the new gardener was very friendly and professional. Great to see the communal areas looking so good. Thank you RSHA for organising.”

# Legionella Alert



**Legionella is a type of bacteria found naturally in freshwater environments, like lochs 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 eg If you aren't using showers or taps regularly, make sure you flush them through at least once a week.
- To flush out your system you need to run the water in all showers, baths, wash basins, sinks and taps continuously for at least 2-3 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 toilets 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 are 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.

## Setting up a Tenant Group

**At our recent Cuppa & Chat Event in Kippen, we received feedback about the lack of grass cuts, and that some tenants would like to be able to plant, and maintain the communal areas themselves. If this is something you would like to do, it would be a good opportunity to set up your own Tenant's Group.**

Setting up a Tenant Group to maintain communal gardens is a great initiative to foster community spirit, improve the local environment, and ensure the gardens are well cared for. To get started you can (with our help):

- Establish guidelines such as rules for the communal gardens.
- Implement and promote, such as having meetings, notice boards or even having a community BBQ!
- Monitor and evaluate, such as reviewing the progress of the garden, getting feedback, and celebrating success (such as RSHA's garden competition).

Survey residents in your developments to gauge interest amongst tenants. This can be done with flyers, emails, social media or WhatsApp groups.

Hold a meeting with other tenants to discuss ideas and gather feedback.

Form a committee and define responsibilities so everyone knows what they are doing.

Develop a plan, such as a rota, and budgeting for tools, plants etc.

Secure resources, such as a tenant membership or grant funding.

If setting up a Tenant Group is something that you would be interested in to make the communal spaces in your development better, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

Tenants at Old Station Court in Strathyre set up their own Resident & Tenant's Association around 12 years ago, when they were not happy with the landscaping. Led by tenant William Dalziel, they organised a resident's meeting with our help and most people in the development were very much for it. William explained that they set up their own committee with a Constitution and Office Bearers, and they then set up their own meetings with AGM's, their own Public Liability Insurance, and applied for small grants for equipment. Each tenant contributes £20 annually (on a voluntary basis) to pay for plants, equipment, bedding plants, and a shed. All the equipment stored in the shed is for everyone in the development to use. They have also used some of the money to put up fairy lights round the trees at Christmas. They created a patio space on the communal ground and use this space to have street parties to bring the development and others living in the village together.





# Development Update

14

## Buchanan Crescent, Croftamie

14 units, including 8 cottage flats and 6 houses.

After commencing earlier this year, progress continues to be made on the 14 new homes by contractor JR Group. Completion is expected at the end of this year. These will be allocated through a Local Lettings Initiative.



11

## Lampson Road, Killearn

11 units, including 8 cottage flats and 3 houses.

Preparatory site works have commenced by McTaggart Construction, with completion expected early summer 2025. These will be allocated through a Local Lettings Initiative.

18

## Tyndrum

18 Units, including 2 semi-detached bungalows, 12 semi-detached houses and 4 cottage flats

After securing the development site in Tyndrum, we have submitted a planning application to the National Park for their consideration. Should planning consent be given and funding provided by Scottish Government, we hope to have a site start in Spring 2025.

22

## Plantation, Balmaha

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.) The unprecedented price increases across the construction industry have meant that the existing scheme is not financially viable. Work continues with funding partners and contractor in order to find a way forward. Until this is possible, the project is being paused.

## Other opportunities

We are currently reviewing development opportunities in other areas, including Aberfoyle.

# Connecting Communities

There has been a significant lack of regular and widespread public transport options in the rural Stirling area.

This presents a challenge when it comes to encouraging people not to use cars, and for those who do not have cars, and find it difficult to reach certain areas. Thankfully, two new pilot schemes have started to help alleviate the issue of public transport in the rural Stirling area

## C60 Bus – Killin to Callander

The C60 bus which had ceased to run at the end of March this year, has resumed for an initial 2-year pilot. It will replace the previous service run by local operator Kingshouse Travel. The 16-seat minibus will operate four return journeys daily from Monday – Saturday along the A84 between Callander and Killin, following the same route as the previous C60 service through communities including Lix Toll, Lochearnhead and Strathyre.



## TROSSACHS EXPLORER

The Trossachs Explorer is a pilot bus service running from 1 July – 30th September 2024, 7 days a week, which aims to address some of the barriers of public transport in the Trossachs area. The service will run from Callander, Kilmahog/Ben Ledi, Brig O'Turk, Ben A'an, Loch Katrine, Ben Venue, The Lodge, Aberfoyle and back again.

### The Route





## Good Neighbour Award Winner 2024

And the winner is... **Alison Baird, Doune** who was

nominated for helping and supporting her neighbours with shopping, washing, and being there when needed to offer support and advice. Well done Alison an inspiration to us all.

**If you have a neighbour who goes above and beyond, why not nominate them for the 2025 Award. Contact us and let us know why you are nominating them and give them a chance of winning a prize.**

# MyRural

**We are pleased to report that the winner of our competition following the launch has now received their tablet and was delighted with their prize!**

My Rural is our online tenant portal which allows you to access your tenancy 24/7 online. You will be able to report repairs, make payments, check you rent balance, update your tenancy details and more!.

At time of writing - we have just over 150 registered users on our portal and are keen to increase this.

## Need help?

**Get in touch with a staff member who can guide you through the registration process.**

To register go to: [myrural.rsha.org.uk](http://myrural.rsha.org.uk)

Or click on the button on the top right of the home page of our website [www.rsha.org.uk](http://www.rsha.org.uk)

To register you will need your National Insurance Number and a valid email address. Did you know you can also help friends or family members by applying to help them get online access to their account by being a "proxy" user. There is an option on the front page of the portal to allow you to apply for this.

## RSHA Garden Competition 2024



### WINNERS:

#### INDIVIDUAL GARDEN CATEGORY:

- First Prize:** Mr and Mrs Elston, Killin
- Second Prize:** Ms Wilson, Doune
- Third Prize:** Mrs Mitchell, Balfron

#### COMMUNAL/SHARED GARDEN CATEGORY:

- First Prize:** Mr Dalziel, Strathyre

#### VEGETABLE GARDEN CATEGORY:

- First Prize:** Mr McLaren, Kippen
- Second Prize:** Mrs Black, Doune

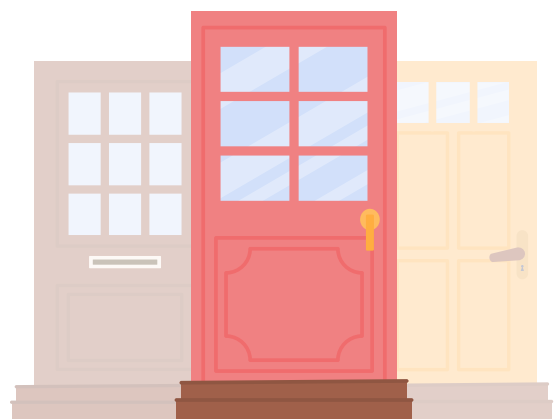
**Well done to all our winners and thanks to our long-standing judge Mr Bill Tait.**

**WHY NOT ENTER NEXT YEAR AND HAVE THE CHANCE OF WINNING A PRIZE!**

## Gaining Access to Meet Legislative Requirements

In October 2023, we adopted a new policy that sets out the approach we will take in securing access for legitimate housing management and maintenance purposes, when this is likely to be required and the steps we will take if permission for access is not granted or not available when necessary. This policy ensures compliance with the outcomes of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework for social housing in Scotland.

A copy of this policy can be found on our website via [www.rsha.org.uk/policies-and-strategies/](http://www.rsha.org.uk/policies-and-strategies/)



# Unacceptable Actions and Zero Tolerance of aggressive behaviour

Unfortunately, staff at Rural Stirling have been subjected to an increase in unacceptable and abusive behaviour in recent months.

We understand that during the current Cost of Living crisis, our tenants may be feeling under more pressure than usual, however at Rural Stirling Housing Association, we do not tolerate abusive or unacceptable behaviour. We ask that you treat staff fairly, and we expect staff to treat you fairly too.

If you treat staff in an unacceptable or abusive way, we will make you aware of this and we may place some restrictions on your contact with us.

## Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Swearing and aggressive language
- Making threats in person, on the phone or via letter or email
- Violence and aggression
- Making unreasonable demands, such as asking us to respond in an unreasonable timescale and sending excessive emails, letters or calls about this
- Repeat contact with the office and refusing to accept a decision

## Action we may take if your behaviour is unacceptable

- Terminate the phone call
- Call the police
- Limiting contact, such as providing a single person to contact or email-only contact
- Formal warnings which may lead to court action to end your tenancy

In all cases of unacceptable behaviour, we will contact you to explain what actions we consider unacceptable and why. We will ask you to change your behaviour and explain what actions we may take if you do not.

**Where we must act, we will tell you in writing what action we are taking and why. We may also request to meet you at our office to discuss the unacceptable actions and agree a way forward.**



# Storing personal items in loft spaces

We do not recommend storing belongings in loft spaces. These spaces are not insulated and as a result can be prone to surface moisture due to the cold and wet climate of our area. The purpose of the insulation in the loft is to keep heat in the living areas of the house, meaning the loft will be cold. Loft spaces are not habitable spaces and are not intended as storage spaces. If you store items in the loft you do so at your own risk.





In addition to the risk of damage to your belongings, storing items in the loft areas can cause damage to ducting used for ventilation of the rooms below and impede air flow in the loft area which is vital to minimise moisture build up.



# Asset Management Update

We are continuing with the planned component replacements and cyclical works previously announced in the Spring edition of Rural Matters.

This programme supports planned component replacements such as

-  window replacements at 37 homes,
-  boiler replacements at 22 homes,
-  external paint works at 56 homes
-  fencing renewals at 32 homes in addition to external decoration across multiple sites.

## This will be a busy year for our Housing and Property Services teams.

Procurement is already underway for these key improvements and the majority of these are on schedule for completion before winter starts.

If you have a query about when your home is next scheduled for a component replacement, please get in touch and we can let you know when this will take place. We make decisions on replacing components in your home by assessing the condition of the item, the time it has been in place and the budget priorities for that year. We will always ensure that a home is safe and when components fail, such as windows, they will be treated as major repairs and replaced in advance of planned works if necessary.

# Lisa's Chicken Kebab with Zingy Rice

## Kebabs

8 chicken thighs (boneless)  
1 tsp ground tumeric  
1 tsp ground cumin  
1 tsp smoked paprika  
1 tsp ground cinnamon  
1 tsp ground ginger  
1 tsp dried oregano  
1 tsp pul biber (Aleppo pepper)  
4 tbsp olive oil  
1 red onion, peeled and halved.

## Rice

200g basmati rice  
1 mild red chilli, finely chopped  
1 red pepper, finely chopped  
1 small red onion, finely chopped  
Cherry tomatoes  
200g tin pineapple chunks, roughly chopped  
Juice from pineapples  
1/2 bag flat leaf parsley, finely chopped  
4 tbsp lime juice

In a bowl or large freezer bag, put the chicken and all the marinade ingredients and give a good mix together with your hands. Cover/seal and leave to marinate for at least an hour, but 8 hours or overnight works best. When ready, bring the chicken up to room temperature, around twenty mins, and make the rice in the mean time.

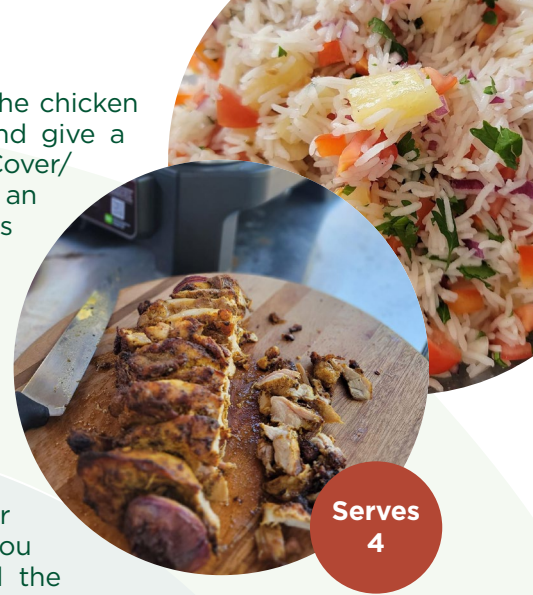
Fill a tea cup with the rice and put it in a pot on a high heat, using same cup add three cups of water. Cook until water starting to evaporate and stir occasionally and taste after 10 mins. Just keep an eye on it, you won't go wrong this way. Chop all the ingredients from rice list and get into a large bowl, add the juices and wait for rice to be ready. When rice is ready, drain and rinse rice under cold water to cool. Drain really well and add to the set aside bowl of ingredients. Mix well and season to taste. Set aside.

Put chicken onto skewer if you have them, start off with half a red onion and then get all the chicken on, then finish with the other half of onion. Pop into your air fryer (remember RSHA are kindly offering tenants one of these bad boys) 180 degrees on air fry option and for 15/20 mins. Check and cook to your liking, (some people like chicken more done than others) if you don't have an air fryer, same applies, just put it in your oven for 25mins at 180.

**Once ready, leave chicken to rest for 10 mins, then slice and serve next to some delicious zingy rice.**

## Tasty and Healthy.

Please check out my Facebook page for more delicious recipes, Lisa Addison Masterchef. Enjoy!



Serves  
4

Lisa is an  
RSHA tenant  
and former  
contestant on  
MasterChef.

## We hope you enjoy reading this edition of Rural Matters.

The newsletter is also available online from our website [www.rsha.org.uk](http://www.rsha.org.uk).

(Past newsletters are also available to download from our website.)

If you would rather not receive a printed version, please let us know by emailing [enquiries@rsha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsha.org.uk), phone the office, 01786 841101, or let your Housing Services Officer or staff member know.

This helps keep costs down. Remember: once you have read it, please recycle!

Thank you!  
RSHA



Police Scotland have asked that the following information be distributed as widely as possible. Stirling Police have reported recent incidents from elderly residents who have been contacted by a suspect claiming to be from Police Scotland fraud department.

They have attempted to convince victims that their bank security has been compromised and that they need to make immediate cash withdrawals to protect their money. Whilst most victims have realised this is a scam one victim was convinced to hand over money to a male suspect believing she was handing it to a police officer. The police will never contact someone on the phone and ask for bank details or ask you to make any cash withdrawals. If you receive any such contact, please terminate the call and phone the police on 101.

## 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)  
Our office is open to the public on Tuesdays, Wednesday afternoons and Thursdays.

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



SCAN ME