

# Newsletter

Summer 2022



## OAK TREE OFFICES NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**We are so pleased to be able to open the doors to our new offices at 40 West Stewart Street and welcome back our customers.**

Although staff are now working from the new office, we have adopted what is called a 'Hybrid' way of working. We will of course have staff working from the office during office opening hours (please refer to opening times below).

In January 2022 we opened on an appointment only basis and from 19 April 2022 we opened the office to the public at the following times:

**Tuesday** 9.00 am till 1.00 pm

**Wednesday** 1.00pm till 5.00 pm

**Thursday** 1.00pm till 5.00pm

This seems to be working well so far and it has been a pleasure to see customers again and let them see our lovely new office space.

The public areas are spacious and airy and we have private interview rooms.

**We are still taking Covid 19 precautions and we would ask you to:**

- Limit the number of adults attending to two from the same household
- Wear a face mask
- Only attend if you have no Covid 19 symptoms and are not self isolating
- Use hand sanitiser on arrival and prior to exit

**In return we will take the following precautions:**

- Staff will wear a face mask
- Hand sanitiser and wipes will be available in public areas
- Alternate use of interview rooms to allow a period of time between use
- Clean desks, door handles etc in interview rooms after each use
- Have a stock of new pens for use when signing documents etc
- An Air Filtration system has been installed to give added assurance to all visitors and staff to the office. This is over and above our enhanced hygiene procedures.

If the opening times are not convenient for you, then you can of course make a specific appointment with a member of staff at a more suitable time.



In January and February of each year, the Association traditionally carries out a consultation exercise on the proposed rent increase being considered from 1 April of that year.

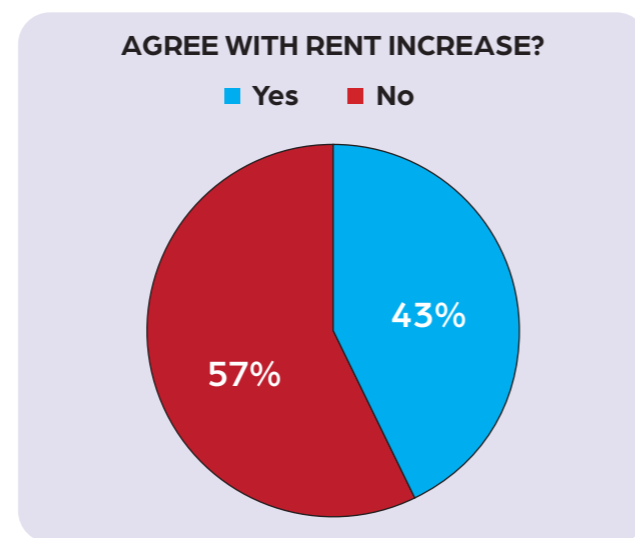
In the past we had held a variety of meetings to discuss this face to face but as with lots of things in the past two years, we had to find a way to do things differently.

We sent everyone information and a survey form by post and for those tenants that we have a mobile number or email address for, we sent an electronic version of the survey. We scheduled online meetings and invited tenants to come along if they wished.

In previous years we have offered different levels of rent increase with additional services for a higher increase.

This year however we were very aware that it was important to keep the increase as low as we possibly could. We were very pleased to be able to only increase the rents by 3%. This was significantly lower than inflation.

**With the cost of living rises affected our business and that of our contractors and suppliers, it is very unlikely that the Association will be able to offer a below inflation increase in future years.**



219 tenants completed the survey which is a 15% response rate.

We asked if tenants felt they had received enough information about the rent increase and 79% said they had. Only 95 people said they agreed with the increase of 3% with 124 disagreeing.

We were keen to capture feedback and we asked for tenants' comments on the rent increase. A total of 131 comments were received.

There were some common themes and the comments were grouped into these themes and the results are shown below:

Theme	Number
Overall rise in cost of living	34
Fair increase	26
Too high	24
Property not up to standard	12
General comment	9
Planned maintenance comments	8
Dissatisfied with service - complaint	6
Repairs service	6
More information needed	4
Enquiry - follow up	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>

**Thank you to everyone who took the time to give us their views. Annual rent increases are required to allow the Association to continue to maintain our services to our customers and remain financially viable.**



It's been a very busy time for the **Inverclyde Common Housing Register (ICHR)**. Oak Tree HA is a partner landlord so it's meant a very busy time for us too.

If you already had an application with the ICHR you would have been invited in December 2021 to take part in the Allocations Policy review consultation. All applicants were surveyed as well as staff, stakeholders and website visitors on the proposed changes to the Allocations Policy.

The new policy sees a change from using a points system to using a priority pass system. This change was introduced following feedback and complaints from users about the current policy and the software used for our housing register and bidding system.

The hope is that the new Policy will be easier to understand, fairer and more transparent and the new digital platform "These Homes" will be an improvement.

Properties stopped being advertised on the old website in March 2022 and the first properties were advertised on the These Homes website on 8 April 2022.

Unfortunately for applicants, everyone will need to re-register on the new system but feedback from staff and applicants so far has been very positive and applicants are finding the application process is running smoothly.

This has been a very busy time for staff in all the partner landlords. There are no dedicated ICHR staff members, each landlord provides staff resources to answer the telephone, email enquiries, process applications and allocate properties. It may take a bit longer to respond to enquiries or answer the telephone so please be patient if you can.

More information on the Allocations Policy or These Homes is available as follows:-  
Telephone: **01475 807011**

Email: [info@inverclydechr.org.uk](mailto:info@inverclydechr.org.uk)

Website <https://www.inverclydechr.org.uk> or [www.oaktreeha.org.uk](http://www.oaktreeha.org.uk)

Facebook and Twitter: @InverclydeCHR

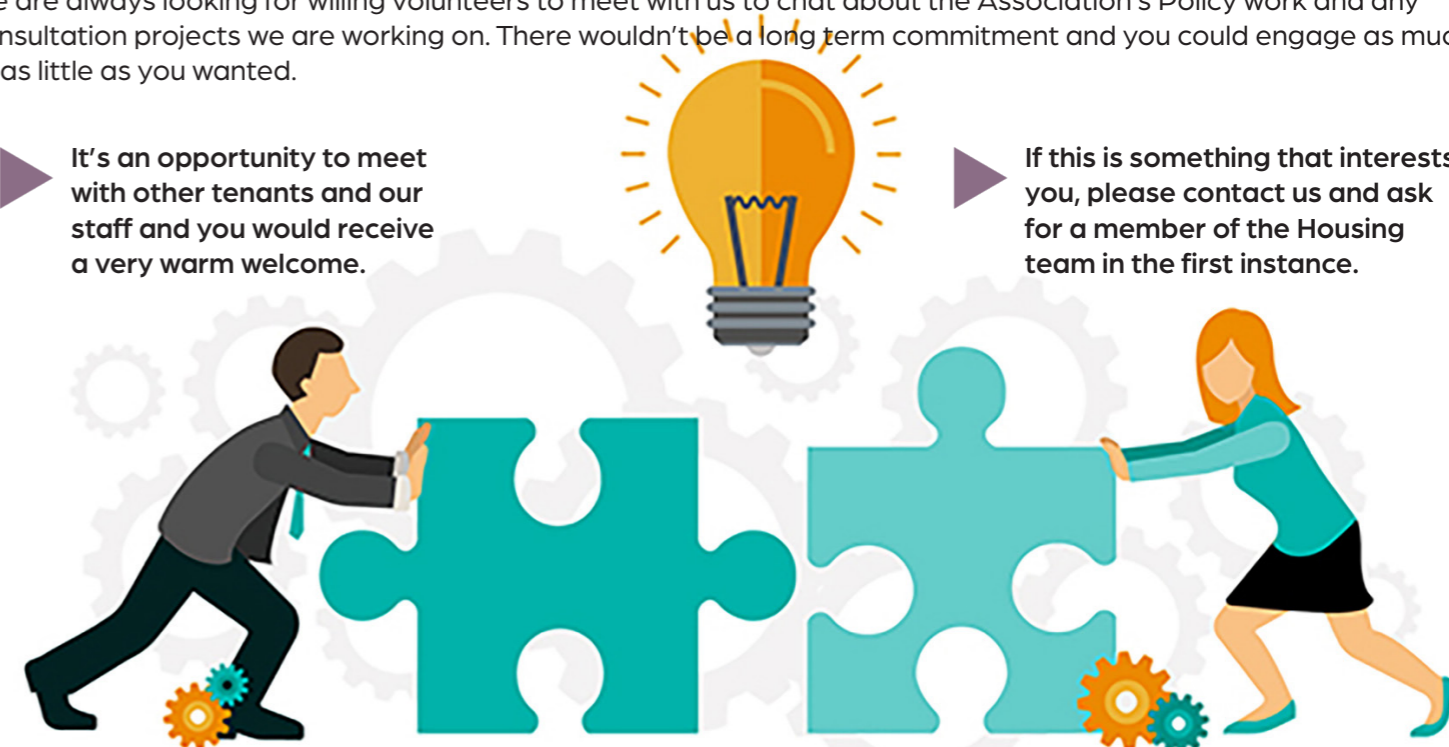
## Focus Group

We have established a small group of tenants who have agreed to be part of our **Focus Group**. The Group is in the very early stages and due to restrictions it has only recently been possible to meet with them in person.

We are always looking for willing volunteers to meet with us to chat about the Association's Policy work and any consultation projects we are working on. There wouldn't be a long term commitment and you could engage as much or as little as you wanted.

► It's an opportunity to meet with other tenants and our staff and you would receive a very warm welcome.

► If this is something that interests you, please contact us and ask for a member of the Housing team in the first instance.



## Energy Activators

We are still involved in a joint project with the **Wise Group** and **Cloch** and **Larkfield Housing Associations** and we have been working well with the Energy Activators. The project will run until September of this year. They provide a range of services:-

**Energy Audits** – a visit to your home to discuss with you in depth how you manage your energy supply and payments and they can provide tips on how to save money and be more energy efficient.

**Help with Energy Debt and accessing Grants and Discounts** – there are lots of different schemes and there could be one that suits you and it could mean direct help with your bills and more money coming into your household budget.

**Energy Cafés** – drop in events in community spaces around Inverclyde where tenants can speak to an advisor in their local area. Look out for info on our Facebook page for venues and dates or contact a member of the Housing team.

We know that this assistance is needed more than ever due to the spiralling costs of living and the price rises for gas and electricity.

**Please get in touch with a member of the housing team and ask for a referral to be made to the Energy Activators.**

## Kickstart Scheme



We are delighted to announce that our application to be part of the **Government's Kickstart Scheme** was approved in December 2021.

The **Kickstart Scheme** provides employers with funding, to create temporary job & training opportunities, for young people aged 16-24.

In March 2022, following a successful recruitment process in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus Greenock, we welcomed Aimee MacKenzie into the role of Junior Clerical-Administration Assistant & Bethany Mayes into the role of Junior Housing Administration Assistant.

## Adaptation Service

Unfortunately, the Contractor who has been carrying out the Associations adaptations works since 2015 has recently ceased trading.

As a result, the Association now needs to undertake a procurement exercise to identify a new contractor to carry out this work. This process is now underway, however, it's unlikely that a new contractor will be in place until the summer months.

**Regrettably, this means that there will be delays experienced in having adaptations works completed. Please bear with us during this time.**

If you have any specific concerns regarding outstanding adaptations works or imminent referrals then please contact us so that we can discuss in more detail.



## Landscape Maintenance

**Our landscape maintenance contract has been extended for another 12 months with our contractor John O`Connor. Cutting season has now commenced from April 2022 which will see fortnightly cuts resumed and general litter picks. To assist our contractor please ensure dog fouling is removed from grassed areas as this may delay/prevent areas being cut due to Health and Safety.**

**Both the Association and John O`Connor would like to thank all residents for their patience over the last year's growing season, and more so, the difficulties that Covid 19 restrictions have made on delivering this contract to the expectations of all.**



## Oak Tree Membership



Lifetime membership of the Association costs just £1 and you can apply at any time. As a member, you would be invited to attend the Association's AGM where you would be entitled to vote for the Management Committee or stand for election to the Management Committee yourself.

If you would like to find out more about membership of Oak Tree Housing Association, or would like an application form, please contact our office on **01475 807000** or email us at **info@oaktreeha.org.uk**



## New Homes – Ness Road & Nevis Road

The Association is delighted to announce the completion of its most recent new-build development in Greenock.

The development at Ness Road and Nevis Road is on the site of the former Bow Farm flats. The 69 new homes, all for social rent, include a mix of back and front door semi-detached and terraced houses as well as cottage flats. There is a mix of three, four and five apartment properties.

The new homes represent an investment of £11.2 million, £5.6 million of which has been funded by the Scottish Government.

The homes have been built by CCG (Scotland) Ltd and meet the Silver Standard of Sustainability of the Scottish Building Standards 2015 which means they have excellent levels of insulation, ensuring a reduction in running costs compared to standard housing.

We hope that all our new tenants are settling in well and enjoying their new homes.



# Tenants Satisfaction Results

Between September and December 2021 we carried out our Tenants Satisfaction Survey and 800 tenants took the time to tell us what they think of us as a landlord and give us ideas on how we could improve.

This large scale survey is carried out every 3 years and would normally be carried out face to face in tenant's homes. It was not possible to do this unfortunately so the company carrying out the survey on our behalf contacted tenants by telephone.

Overall we were pleased with the results. More than 9 out of 10 tenants were happy with how we keep them informed and their opportunities to participate, more that 8 out of 10 were satisfied with our overall service, our repairs service and the management of their neighbourhood and more than three quarters of tenants thought their rent was good value for money and they were satisfied with the quality of their home.

It is clear that the Covid 19 pandemic has affected how we have been able to deliver our services – repairs, planned maintenance and estate management in particular and we have seen reductions in satisfaction in a number of areas. We understand that across Scotland, housing associations and local authorities are experiencing similar survey outcomes.

Telephone surveys also tend to have less positive results than face to face surveys and we also had fewer responses than usual.

Some survey questions are standard across Scotland with all housing associations and local authorities reporting their results to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The table below shows the results for these standard questions compared to the last time we surveyed our tenants in 2018.

Percentage of tenants satisfied with...	2021	2018
Overall service provided my landlord	85%	92%
Keeping tenants informed	93%	98%
Participation opportunities	93%	98%
Repairs service	82%	88%
Quality of the home	77%	89%
Management of the neighbourhood	82%	95%

We also wanted to know how our customers prefer to receive information from us. It was very interesting to see a change from the previous survey. Some of this will have been as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic when staff and customers had to find new ways to keep in touch.

55% said that they preferred to be kept informed by newsletter. Although this is a high number, it has fallen from 2018 when 82% of tenants chose that method.

Almost 30% of our tenants chose email this time in contrast to only 1% in 2018. A similar change was evident with text messaging being a preferred method of contact for 20% of tenants now when none chose this method in 2018.

Social media platforms and our website came low on everyone's list of preferences which is important information for us to be aware of when promoting or designing future services.

A key item that we were very keen to have information on was how our office being closed had impacted on our tenants. We asked if the office being closed had changed how tenants contact the Association.

76%	I usually phone so my contact is no different
11%	I now phone instead of visiting
9%	I haven't needed to be in contact so it has made no difference
2%	I now email instead of visiting
1%	I prefer to visit so haven't been in touch
1%	Other

We also asked how tenants would prefer to be contacted in the future (tenants could choose more than one method) and the most popular were:-

93%	Telephone
15%	Email
6%	Text message
3%	Letter
2%	Website
2%	Visit to office

We are working on an Action Plan to take forward a number of items that we can improve upon and the comments made on individual items will be analysed and used to improve our customer service.

**Thank you to everyone who took part in the survey, your comments really help us.**

## Mural – Nicolson Street



**The Association was absolutely delighted to be part of this project which saw the gable wall of one of our blocks of flats in Nicolson Street**

The mural was a collaborative project between the Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) Infant Feeding Team and funded by the Scottish Government's through its 'Programme for Government'.

The idea is around normalising breastfeeding to encourage more local mums and expectant parents to breastfeed and continue to improve breastfeeding rates.

Catriona MacLean, Inverclyde HSCP health visitor and infant feeding coordinator, took this project forward and was quoted in the press as follows: "The immense health benefits of breastfeeding for mother and baby make it a public health priority.

Breastfeeding rates in Inverclyde remain low, however, providing excellent information and support during pregnancy and immediately following birth can smooth the breastfeeding journey.

*"Inverclyde has welcomed with open arms the Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland Scheme with business and facilities continuing to sign up and this beautiful new piece of public art will support a whole area-wide approach to supporting families."*

The HSCP team approached internationally-acclaimed artist Sam Bates (also known as Smug). He has already created popular murals in Glasgow and has worked on projects in Australia.

It was fantastic to be part of this project, meet Sam and see the artwork reveal itself over the 2 weeks or so it took to paint. Unfortunately the weather wasn't kind and he had to endure storms, rain and finally snow!

The Mural was completed on 24 February 2022 and Sam left for Australia a few days later where he will be working for 3 months on a variety of projects.

Sam is pictured in the photo on the left, with Catriona McLean (left) and Councillor Lynne Quinn (right).



We inspect all our closes and estates at least once a quarter, but in the summer months we do a more detailed estate walkabout and try to speak to as many tenants as we can.

We let tenants know who will be in their area and when and the Housing Services team enjoy the chance to meet people and have a chat about their area.

We use this opportunity to have a look at the individual gardens and you might see the staff team taking photos and we use this as the basis for judging our garden competition.

“ *It's been a tough couple of years and we have missed the chance to get out and about and see our tenants in their homes and to have an informal chat.* ”

We will also take details of any repairs needing done or any neighbourhood issues that could be improved or need action.

We collate this information and use it to improve and tailor our services better to meet the needs of our customers.

We are always keen for feedback and if you don't get the chance to speak to staff when they were on their walkabout then please either phone, email or message us via the Web Portal with your comments.



## Significant Performance Failures

As a tenant of a registered social landlord (RSL), you can report a significant performance failure (SPF) to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR).

### What is a significant performance failure?

The SHR has set out in their Regulatory Framework what they mean by an SPF. An SPF is where a Landlord:

- Consistently and repeatedly fails to achieve outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter or outcomes agreed locally with tenants; or
- Has not reported its performance annually to its tenants or the annual reported performance does not reflect actual performances; or
- Has materially failed to meet the Standards of Governance and Financial Management; and
- Has acted, or failed to take action in a way which puts tenants' interests at risk and this significantly affects a number of the landlord's tenants.

### Examples

An SPF could happen where a Landlord is:

- Consistently not doing repairs when it should
- Not allowing tenants to apply for another house
- Putting tenants' safety at risk, for example because it is not doing gas safety checks when it should
- Not helping tenants to report anti-social behaviour
- Not reporting its performance in achieving the outcomes and standards in the Scottish Housing Charter to its tenants.

Further information can be found in the Related Information Section of the "Make a Complaint" page on our website: <https://www.oaktreeha.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

<https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-tenants/read-our-factsheets-for-tenants/significant-performance-failures-information-for-tenants-of-social-landlords>

## The close/common stair is your only means of escape in the event of a fire.



Have you ever thought what you would do if fire were to break out in your close/common stair? It may not necessarily be in your flat! A fire started in a close/common stair could kill you and your family. Even a small bag of rubbish can create enough smoke to fill a whole close/common stair. Items left in a close/common stair are often deliberately set on fire.

### Keep it clear

- Get rubbish, old furniture, etc out of the building.
- Make sure storage areas are kept locked.
- For advice on uplifting items contact your local Council.

### If fire does start

- Keep doors closed to prevent smoke filling your house.
- Dial 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service, giving as much information as you can.



To request a free Home Fire Safety Visit  
**CALL 0800 0731 999**  
 For more fire safety advice visit:  
[www.firescotland.gov.uk](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk)





**Greenock Pantry**

115 Grieve Road  
Greenock PA16 7AW  
www.scottishpantrynetwork.org.uk

**OPENING HOURS**

Monday	10am – 3pm
Tuesday	10am – 3pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	Closed
Friday	Closed
Saturday	10am – 3pm

**Our Mission:**

Our vision is to create a sustainable network of pantries, where saving surplus food from landfill can help support a holistic approach to food insecurity. The pantry is a dignified approach empowering communities to help themselves. Providing a shop with low cost food, with the shop itself being utilised as a training facility to upskill the community and a hub element providing wrap around services tailored to the needs of the community.

The Scottish Pantry Network will help to create these pantries in communities, providing help and support to get them started. The Network will then provide ongoing support to the pantries through compliance, lobbying and creating links with food suppliers.

**The organisation’s purposes are:**

- ▶ The prevention of poverty and the relief of financial hardship by providing food security to those who need it most and being disadvantaged due to unemployment, low income, lone parent, health, and social standing.
- ▶ The advancement of community development by acting on behalf of the Network of Pantries, sourcing food to ensure there is enough in the supply chain, lobbying government, providing a regulatory function, and sharing best practice across the Network.
- ▶ Advancement of environmental protection by reducing food waste locally and nationally.
- ▶ Advancement of education by increasing access to skills, training and employment prospects in relation to developing and running a local pantry.
- ▶ Advancement of health by improving health outcomes – particularly around the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, through social eating, improving emotional wellbeing and social inclusion through Pantries acting as community hubs, and by promoting access to nutritious meals and increase fruit and vegetable consumption.
- ▶ Relief for those in need by providing access to key support such as money advice, credit unions, housing, health, employment and skills.



The Association launched its **Web Portal** some time ago and it has proved to be very popular with over 500 tenants registered.

We have been looking at ways to improve its features and we are working with a company called **Allpay** to provide a way that you can make payments to your rent account from the Portal more easily and the payments will show in your account more quickly than the present method.

We think this will be a great addition to the Portal and allow more tenants to get the benefit of being able to check their accounts and make payments more easily.

We want to refresh the content too and add some other forms and features. If you use the Portal at the moment and have suggestions on improvements, please do let us know.

There is a “comments” facility already so please do let know.

If you haven’t already registered then please go to our website [www.oaktreeha.org.uk](http://www.oaktreeha.org.uk) and click “Portal Login” You can also download an app to make it easier to access once you have registered.

**If you need help getting registered please give us a call and we will be happy to help.**

Management Committee Minutes



**The Oak Tree Housing Association Management Committee**, are in overall charge of Oak Tree Housing Association (OTHA).

The Management Committee (MC) provides leadership and direction, approves strategy, policy and budgets, approves the Business Plan and oversees its delivery, oversees risks and financial well-being and fulfils the role of employer. Responsibility for the day-to day operational management of OTHA is delegated to senior management known within Oak Tree as the Management Team (MT).

Regular meetings take place to discuss a variety of reports and documents, which are required for the running of Oak Tree. These formal meetings have a minute taken to record in particular, who attended and what decisions were made. The MC minutes are available on our website, within our Publication Scheme shown here: <http://www.oaktreeha.org.uk/documents/#governanceandhr>

We are keen to hear what you think about these minutes, for example, do you obtain a good sense that the MC is providing an effective oversight at OTHA? Are you happy with the type and level of information that OTHA records in its minutes, to provide you with assurance that the MC and MT are doing a good job?

OTHA has a practice of open communication both internally and externally, about our work and decisions. Openness may sometimes though, be set alongside obligations to keep some types of information confidential. For example, personal information about service users and employees, must remain confidential.

To discuss our Management Committee Minutes content, or to request to attend a Management Committee meeting, in order to observe a meeting, please contact **Nick Jardine** or **Anne Culley** at the office.

## Rechargeable Repairs

**The Association does not carry out all repairs in tenants' properties and some repairs are the tenants' responsibility.**

We call these rechargeable repairs and these can be:

- Repairs to damage that has been caused deliberately by you, your relatives or visitors;
- Callouts to fix TV signal problems if it is found that the fault is with your own equipment or leads;
- Callouts to emergency services when you do not give access;
- Repairs caused by a fault due to your fixtures, fittings, or installations;
- When you repeatedly fail to give access after making an arrangement to do so;
- Repairs to items installed by you which are your responsibility;
- Gaining access to the property where you have lost your keys;
- End of tenancy repairs where you fail to leave the property in an acceptable condition and to hand in 2 sets of keys.

If you are unsure if your repair falls into one of the above categories please contact us on **01475 807001**.

**A full list can be found in your Tenant Handbook and Tenancy Agreement. Please contact us if you would like another copy.**

## Reactive Repairs Contractor

The Association procured a new Reactive Repairs maintenance contract with **The McDougall Group** in November 2021.

The McDougall Group has now novated to **McGills** and you will see tradesmen with the **McGills** logo on their vans, work-wear and identification cards.

We are now offering a full repairs service and McGills are working hard to work through the backlog of repairs reported during the pandemic. We have been getting in touch with tenants to provide updated timescales for completion of works. Unfortunately delays have been caused by a shortage of materials and long waiting times as a result of the high demand.

If you have not been contacted or would like a further update, please do not hesitate to get in touch with our Repairs Line staff on **01475 807001**.

We thank all our tenants for their understanding and ongoing patience during this difficult time.

## Repairs Satisfaction Surveys

The Association is using CX survey software and all tenants will receive a repairs satisfaction survey to complete following the completion of their repair.

It is a short survey comprising 4 questions and the purpose of the survey is to ensure that we are providing an excellent repairs service to our tenants. It will also help us to identify areas where we can make improvements to our service.

There is also a comments section if you wish to add some additional information.

Any negative feedback or suggestions for improvement are fed back to our reactive repairs contractor with a view to ensuring a better service moving forward.

In order to ensure that tenants are not bombarded with surveys, the software is sophisticated and parameters have been put in place so that tenants are not receiving a survey too often should they have reported several repairs over a short period of time.

Thank you for all tenants that have completed their survey so far and we would encourage tenants to complete future surveys as your feedback is important to us.

## Joiner Apprentice Opportunity (see back cover)



**The Association recently awarded a new contract for their voids repair service to P&D Scotland whose parent company is The Bell Group.**

**As part of the contract conditions, P&D are required to deliver on Community Benefits and the Association is delighted to announce that The Bell Group have secured a 4 year joiner apprenticeship place at the University of West of Scotland.**

**The apprenticeship will begin late August – early September 2022 and recruitment will be launched nearer the time to manage expectations.**

**The anticipated dates are as follows:**

- **Applications will be open to candidates from 1st June 2022.**
- **Enquiries should be made directly by sending your CV to [k.docherty@bellgroup.co.uk](mailto:k.docherty@bellgroup.co.uk).**
- **The Bell Group will then review and coordinate work trials and interviews to identify a suitable candidate.**
- **The closing date for applications is the 1st July 2022.**
- **An offer will be made to the successful candidate by the 14th August 2022.**
- **The candidate will start their apprenticeship by late August/early September 2022.**

***The Bell Group will coordinate advertising with local schools, colleges and employability projects, in line with the above dates.***

## Maintenance Staff Update



Peter MacDonald

### Senior Maintenance Officer Vacancy

We are delighted to announce that our long standing Maintenance Officer, **Peter MacDonald**, has been promoted to Senior Maintenance Officer. Peter has worked with the Association for 19 years with the first 5 being based in the Housing Services section and the latter years within the Maintenance section.



David Fulton

We have successfully back filled Peter's position and **David Fulton** will join the section as Maintenance Officer on the 11th April 2022. David is joining us from Southside Housing Association and is an experienced Maintenance Officer.

### Repairs Assistant

We also wish to welcome **Louise Blue** to the section as our Repairs Assistant. Louise's position was created on a Fixed Term 1 Year basis to help assist with the increased workload and demand within the section.



Louise Blue



Target Area	Task Targets	Target Times (annual %)	Method of measuring performance	Performance July - Sept 2021	Performance Oct - Dec 2021
Answer incoming telephone calls	Within 20 secs	100%	Export of data from telephone system	*See note below	*See note below
Return telephone call	By end of next working day	100%	Checking complaints register and Customer Care survey for non-compliance	100%	100%
Email response	5 working days	100%	As above	100%	100%
Social Media response	5 working days	100%	Facebook inbox & comments	100%	100%
Check new housing application, point and process	10 working days	100%	ICHR Housing Connections Software	97.8%	98.8%
Time to wait for an appointment to see specific member of staff	Same or next working day	95%	Survey carried out twice per month (rotating days)	N/A – office closed	N/A – office closed
Appointments kept/attended on time	Within 5 mins of agreed time	100%	Survey carried out twice per month (rotating days)	N/A – office closed	N/A – office closed
Acknowledge or fully respond to a written enquiry	5 working days	95%	Incoming mail register	96%	90%
Behavioural code of Committee, Staff and Contractors/Agents	Adherence to Code	100%	Based on complaints received via Complaints Handling Procedure	1 incident	5 incidents
Behavioural code of Customers	Adherence to Code	100%	Managers reporting incidents	100%	1 incident



**\*Answering incoming telephone calls:** unfortunately due to an issue with the reporting software and staff absences the statistics are not available. This will be remedied as soon as possible and the outcome will be reported in a future report.

**Estate Management Policy Review**



This Policy is due for review in summer 2022. This Policy looks at how we manage our estates in general and how we approach estate management complaints in particular. We are considering a separate **Anti-Social Behaviour Policy** which would take some elements from the existing policy into this new Policy.

We know that this is an important policy that affects our residents so it's important that any changes or amendments that we make take your views into account.

We will be taking the opportunity to speak to tenants during our **Estate Walkabouts** and there will be a survey issued to all residents during the consultation period.





**We have now established a comprehensive equality strategy, which we have been implementing from April 2022.**

As well as our recently reviewed equality and diversity policy and equality action plan, we have developed other detailed procedures to ensure effective equality impact assessments of Oak Tree Housing services.

An equality impact assessment involves assessing our policies, procedures and related documentation so that they comply with equality law and associated guidance.

One very important procedure that we have been developing is our equality data collection procedure. This is the procedure that we would like to explain so you are aware of present developments.

## Equality data collection procedure

This section explains the following issues:

- regulatory context;
- our staff procedures;
- new equality data collection forms;
- starting to collect equality data; and
- implications for tenants.

## Regulatory context

The Scottish Housing Regulator requires social landlords in Scotland to collect equality data as part of their commitment to mainstream equality objectives throughout organisational services.

The data that we require to collect relates to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010<sup>1</sup>. We are to collect equality data for several groups; one of these groups is our tenants.

## Our staff procedures

Our staff will be collecting equality data in line with our new equality data collection procedures.

You should note that these procedures are regulated by our data protection processes.

### This means that we:

- only collect equality data if we are entitled to do so;
- process data securely and confidentially, as appropriate;
- restrict access to equality data;<sup>2</sup>
- only collect data if we have clear reasons or purposes for doing so;
- update information in ways agreed with you; and
- destroy such data in line with our data retention schedule.

## New equality data collection forms

We have also developed a new equality data collection form that you will be asked to complete. Although you only need to complete this form if you want to, it is stressed that information that we gather is used to promote your interests. Examples of this are given below.

### Example 1

By letting us know if you are a disabled person and advising us of your needs, then we can adjust our services to address your particular requirements. In law, this is known as making reasonable adjustments.

### Example 2

By telling us about your ethnicity and related needs, we can ensure providing you with appropriate services, for example, arranging interpreters for Polish tenants who do not speak English.

### Example 3

By letting us know your beliefs and needs, then we can ensure that we do not discriminate in service provision. For instance, we would avoid holding meetings with you on dates notified to us as religious holidays.

## Starting to collect equality data

We intend to pilot using the new equality data collection from the Summer of 2022 onwards after:

- providing staff training; and
- testing the form ("a pilot project").

## Implications for tenants

- You do not need to do anything for now as we will contact you when it is time to complete the equality form.
- We are also developing a tenant leaflet about what equality data we are collecting and why; this will be sent to you along with the form.
- By participating in this equality data collection process, you will be supporting us to develop a comprehensive data base.
- This data base will support us, not only to provide services tailored to your needs, but also to promote the Public Sector Equality Duty.<sup>3</sup>
- As well as promoting equality objectives, the Duty requires us, when providing services, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

## Summary



Our new equality strategy has been developed to ensure that equality law and guidance is incorporated throughout all Oak Tree Housing services. This is known as equality mainstreaming. An important aspect of the strategy is to collect equality data from tenants. We will use this information, not simply to ensure compliance with law and regulatory provisions, but to tailor housing services to the needs of tenants.

Should you have any particular questions about our equality strategy that you would like to ask, please do not hesitate to contact the office.

<sup>1</sup> Examples of data that we will be collecting include information about a person's race, and sex. Altogether we will be collecting information about nine protected characteristics. The word "ethnicity" is used instead of race.

<sup>2</sup> Most of the protected characteristics constitute special category under data protection law; this means that data processing is subject to strict standards.

<sup>3</sup> The Equality Act 2010, section 149, sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty that has three parts, namely to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

## Pathways to Construction

**We are delighted to confirm the continued delivery of Pathways to Construction until March 2023.**

**The programme is designed to create temporary, paid opportunities for people within Inverclyde who are currently unemployed.**

**Participants will gain practical experience, new skills and formal training within the construction sector, as well as receive employability skills support.**

**On the 3rd of May 2022, OTHA successfully inducted 6 new trainees, who will work alongside our Project Co-ordinator, Robert.**

**UP TO DATE**

When your tenancy began, we would have asked you for contact details – telephone numbers, email address, next of kin details etc. Over time however these details may have changed and in particular we are finding that some mobile telephone numbers that we hold are no longer working. We will be carrying out an exercise over the coming year to try and update our records so you may find you are asked to confirm contact numbers when you call us. There are times when we will need to contact you – for example if there is an emergency issue in your area that we need to tell you about or we need access to your property. If you are registered on the Web Portal you will be able to see the contact details we hold for you and you can add, delete or change the details yourselves.

Recipes



**Pesto-crusted Cod with Puy Lentils**

**Prep:** 15 mins  
**Cook:** 8 – 10 mins  
**Makes:** 2 servings

**Ingredients:**

- Large pack basil, leaves only
- 4 garlic cloves, 2 whole, 2 crushed
- 25g pine nut
- 1 lemon
- 50ml olive oil
- 2 cod fillets
- 2 red chillies, finely chopped
- 2 large tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 250g ready-to-eat puy lentils

**Method:**

**Step 1:** First, make the pesto in a food processor: add the basil, whole garlic cloves, pine nuts, juice of half the lemon and some seasoning. Gradually add most of the oil. Taste and adjust the seasoning.  
**Step 2:** Heat oven to 180C – 160C fan – gas 4. Line a roasting tin with foil. Season the cod on both sides and coat each fillet with pesto. Cook for 8-10 mins until a crust has formed and the cod is cooked through.  
**Step 3:** Meanwhile, heat the remaining oil in a small saucepan. Add the crushed garlic and chillies, and cook for a couple of mins to release flavour. Add the tomatoes and cook for 1 min more. Tip in the lentils, squeeze over the other half of the lemon then season. Cook until piping hot and serve with the pesto cod.

**Kcal:** 672 **Fat:** 37g **Saturates:** 5g **Carbs:** 34g  
**Sugar:** 7g **Fibre:** 11g **Protein:** 45g **Salt:** 1.6g



**Redcurrant Sorbet**

**Prep:** 15 mins  
**Cook:** 25 mins (plus freezing)  
**Makes:** 4 small portions

**Ingredients:**

- 40g redcurrants, plus extra for decoration
- 2 tbsp elderflower cordial
- 140 golden caster sugar

**Method:**

**Step 1:** Remove redcurrants from stem, wash and put in a pan with 2 tbsp water. Bring to the boil, lower the heat, cover and simmer for 5 mins until softened. Push through a sieve to make a puree. Stir in the elderflower cordial and set to one side to cool down.  
**Step 2:** Put castor sugar in a pan with 300ml (1/2pt) water and leave over a low heat for 5 mins until the sugar dissolves. Raise heat and boil for 10 mins.  
**Step 3:** Tip redcurrant mixture into syrup and mix. Return to the boil, turn down and simmer for 2 mins. Cool then, pour into a container and freeze for 3-4 hrs, until frozen. Scoop into glasses and top with redcurrants.

**Kcal:** 178 **Fat:** 0g **Saturates:** 0g **Carbs:** 26g **Sugar:** 41g **Fibre:** 4g **Protein:** 1g **Salt:** 0.01g



The title is a bit of a tongue twister but we really hope that this idea appeals to as many people as possible.

We have really missed being able to speak to tenants in person and have a chat over a cup of tea and a cake.

Baking has never been more popular but it has also never gone out of fashion and we know that lots of you will have a tried and tested favourite recipe that we hope you would like to share.

The plan is to collect recipes that can be made into a little booklet that will be published and sent out with a future newsletter. The theme is tea time treats but what we really mean is anything at all that can be eaten with a cuppa – cakes, shortbread, scones, biscuits, tarts, pies, tray bakes, tablet – you name it we will eat it!

Please use the form below to send us details of your favourite recipe, nominate a friend or neighbour that you know is a keen baker (and they are too shy to come forward themselves) and we will contact them. You could post or hand in the form or just telephone the office on 01475 807000 or email us at [info@oaktreeha.org.uk](mailto:info@oaktreeha.org.uk). We will get in contact as soon as we can.

We thought it would be a great idea to have an event in our new office when people could bring along their bakes and we could have some fun testing them out and if there are too many for the booklet then we may need a panel of judges who would select their favourite recipes for the booklet.

This is hopefully something that will appeal to tenants of all ages and we would love it if children wanted to get involved. We have a number of tenants who have moved to Scotland more recently or perhaps generations ago and having some recipes which originate from another part of the world would be fantastic. It's an opportunity for our Scottish tenants to pass on their famous shortbread or pancake recipe to a new audience too.

Name .....

Address .....

Tel No .....

Please tick, as appropriate:

I would like to take part and provide a recipe

or

I would like to nominate someone to provide a recipe

Name, and telephone number of nominee: .....

Favourite recipe name: .....

Any comments you want to add: .....

**STAY  
in  
TOUGH!**



01475 807000



info@oaktreeha.org.uk



Oak Tree  
Housing  
Association



@OakTreeHA



PORTAL  
www.oaktreeha.org.uk



WEBSITE  
www.oaktreeha.org.uk



TWITTER  
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OTHA WEBSITE  
QR Code

# BRIGHT FUTURES ARE MADE AT BELL

Bell Group are looking to take on a Joinery apprentice.

The opening date for the apprenticeship is the **June 1st** and will be open until July 10th.

To apply – send a CV to:  
k.docherty@bellgroup.co.uk

There is no better time to apply for an apprenticeship with us than now!

- Earn while you learn
- Gain independence & confidence
- Develop your skills & experience
- Benefit from Mentor support
- Achieve a nationally recognised qualification
- Progress within Bell

Find out more about us by visiting  
[www.bellgroup.co.uk](http://www.bellgroup.co.uk)



**bell**  
painting and building maintenance.



## Public Holidays:

**2nd & 3rd June 2022**  
Queen's Platinum Jubilee

**1st & 4th July 2022**  
Greenock Fair Holiday

**2nd & 5th September 2022**  
September Weekend

If you have an emergency repair during office closure periods, please call the office on **01475 807001**, listen to the message, you will then be connected to our Emergency Repairs Contractor. You can also visit our website [www.oaktreeha.org.uk](http://www.oaktreeha.org.uk) for further information on reporting emergency repairs out with office hours.

## Oak Tree Housing Street Names

W	E	L	L	I	N	G	T	O	N	E	G	G	O
H	L	M	M	E	M	N	A	N	N	I	I	L	R
T	E	I	A	A	U	O	S	T	C	P	A	O	O
U	N	U	P	N	R	T	K	R	T	S	R	C	G
O	T	L	A	Y	R	H	E	H	E	L	C	I	R
S	E	U	F	E	A	C	R	R	R	O	S	N	E
I	E	O	I	W	Y	N	R	H	O	G	N	K	E
N	H	C	N	O	C	A	A	C	M	N	E	R	N
V	C	N	N	B	L	R	P	O	H	E	V	K	B
E	O	E	A	I	I	B	U	D	T	W	A	E	A
R	N	N	R	G	R	C	C	E	A	T	R	L	N
K	R	S	T	O	C	P	T	N	R	O	C	L	K
I	O	W	R	E	N	M	I	Y	T	N	N	Y	F
P	D	E	L	Y	G	R	A	L	S	E	O	A	E

BOW  
PRINCES  
MAPLE  
STRATHMORE  
WELLINGTON  
BRANCHTON  
FINNART  
RAVENS CRAIG  
NEWTON  
LYNE DOCH  
KELLY  
WREN  
MURRAY  
NICOL  
CUPAR  
GREENBANK  
DORNOCH  
GOLSPIE  
INVERKIP  
SOUTH  
ARGYLE  
TASKER

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