Welcome to “The Ochil View”, Ochil View Housing Association’s Winter Newsletter for 2016. We hope you find it interesting and informative, and please send any comments to customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk.

Christmas and Office Closure 2016/17

The Management Committee and staff of Ochil View Housing wish all readers a peaceful Christmas and prosperous New Year.

The Association will close at 12 noon on Friday 16th December and re-open at 9:00am on Monday 19th December. We will close at 5:00pm on Friday 23rd December until 9.00 am on Thursday 29th December 2016.

The office will be open Thursday 29th and Friday 30th December 2016 at 9.00am till 5.00pm.

We will close at 5.00pm on Friday 30th December 2016 until 9.00am on Wednesday 4th January 2017.

We will advertise properties for Choice Based Letting in the week beginning 19th December 2016. The closing date for these properties will be 29th December 2016. We will not advertise anymore properties until the week beginning 9th January 2017.

The Emergency Repairs Service will be in operation as usual when the office is closed. Please refer to your Tenant’s Handbook for advice on the Emergency Repairs Service. Please report non-emergency repairs when the office re-opens.

Emergency repairs service is available by calling the following numbers:

All emergencies: The McDougall Group 0800 975 1234 or 01324 471797 or local rate: 0333 123 1011

If you have problems with electricity, water or gas, call the following:
Scottish Power: 0845 27 27 999
Scottish Water: 0845 600 8855
Scottish Gas Network: 0800 111 999
Other useful emergency numbers are in your Tenants’ Handbook.

Xmas Hols
Monday 26th December 2016
Tuesday 27th December 2016
Wednesday 28th December 2016

New Year
Monday 2nd January 2017
Tuesday 3rd January 2017

Office will re-open at 9.00 am on Wednesday 4th January 2017
Getting involved with Ochil View

There are a range of different ways you can become involved with Ochil View and participate in our decision making process:

🌟 Give feedback on the service we provide to you. We record all feedback we receive and use this to help to improve service, wherever possible.

❄️ Visit our Facebook page and leave a comment there. If you’re a Facebook user, search for Ochil View. You’ll see our logo and Ochil House on our page.

👩‍👧‍👦 Join the Involved Residents Group - the group meets 4 times each year and is the main focus of tenant and resident consultation with Ochil View.

 addObserver Ochil View - any tenant can become a member and stand to be elected to the Management Committee at the AGM.

드립니다 Register to complete online surveys or surveys by post. Leave your details at https:// www.surveymonkey.com/r/ involvedresident.

💌 Tell us your email address and we’ll let you know when there are new surveys online to be completed.

❄️ Come on an estate walkabout with us - we’ll tell you on Facebook and by text when one is happening in your area.

Send your views by text to 078600 20474

Smart Meters

You’ll soon receive a letter about the Smart Meter Rollout from your energy supplier.

Smart Meters are being rolled out throughout the UK and are part of a Government Strategy to upgrade our energy supply and tackle climate change.

Smart Meters will give you more control over your energy use, help you understand your bills, and allow you to see what the energy you use is costing you.

Smart Meters aren’t compulsory and people can choose not to have one. However, the government requires energy suppliers to offer smart meters to all homes across the UK by 2020.

If you would like more information, go online to www.smartenergygb.org or contact your Energy Supplier.

Getting Ready For Winter

🌟 Cold and damp conditions in poorly heated homes can have an effect on the health of your household.

Heating Your Home

🌟 A good heating regime is a temperature of 21°C in the living room and 18°C in other rooms for 9 hours in every 24, usually 2 hours in the morning and 7 hours in the evening. For households with older people or young children who are at home more, this increases to 16 hours in every 24.

🌟 In very cold weather, rather than turn the thermostat up, set the heating to come on earlier and stay on longer. This means you won’t be cold while you wait for your home to heat up.

Staying Warm

🌟 In winter, keep your bedroom window closed. If your bedroom is too warm, turn the radiator down, or set the heating to go off earlier, giving the room time to cool down before you go to bed.

If you have an electric blanket or a hot water bottle, they’ll help you keep warm at night. You should never use them together, as you could electrocute yourself.
Paying Fuel Bills

By following some simple energy saving tips, you can reduce your bills:

- Boil only the water you need.
- Let food cool to room temperature before you put it in the fridge or freezer.
- Don’t leave appliances like televisions on stand-by.
- If you are struggling to pay gas or electricity bills, contact your supplier as soon as possible to avoid debt mounting up. They will have payment schemes that let you spread your bill out over the year.
- In certain circumstances you may be entitled to payment of the Warm Home Discount. Contact the Ochil View Housing Association’s Tenancy Sustainment Team on 01259 722899 for a referral to the HEAT team at Clackmannanshire Council, or contact them direct on 01259 450000 to check if you are eligible and to apply for this. (If you live in Fife, the number you require to call is Greener Kirkcaldy - Tel: 01592 858458).

Keeping Well

You should talk to your GP about having a free flu jab if you:

- Are aged 65 years or over.
- Have serious heart disease, serious renal disease, diabetes mellitus or serious respiratory disease (including asthma).
- Have lowered immunity caused by a disease or medical treatment.
- Your GP may also suggest you have a flu jab if you have a serious liver disease.
- Frequently and thoroughly washing your hands will also help you avoid flu and other infections.
- A balanced diet will help keep you warm and healthy in the winter. Try to keep a stock of food in case you can’t get out to the shops in very cold weather.

If you are ill, contact NHS 24 by telephoning 111 or by visiting www.nhs24.com and following the online instructions.
Legionella Update for Tenants

As a landlord we have a responsibility to ensure that our tenants are aware of the risks of Legionnaire’s disease, which can be a potentially fatal form of pneumonia, affecting anybody. The disease is caused by inhaling small droplets of water from contaminated sources which contain Legionella bacteria. All hot and cold water systems in properties can be a potential source for Legionella bacteria growth.

The main risk comes when the bacteria multiplies, increases to dangerous levels and then spreads. This is only ever likely to happen in spray from showers and taps, but could become present in dishwasher and washing machine pipes. It also depends heavily on the conditions being right, where water between 20°C and 45°C stagnates or where there is sludge, rust or scale present for the bacteria to feed upon and multiply.

The symptoms of Legionnaire’s disease are similar to flu, however, there is no need for concern as the risk is very small with on average, up to 500 cases reported each year in the UK.

The disease is easily preventable by putting in place some simple control measures such as:

⭐ Flushing through showers/taps for around 5-10 minutes following a period of non-use (this could be after you have been on holiday, or if a room is not used regularly).
⭐ Keep shower heads and taps clean and free from a build-up of lime scale, mould or algae growth.
⭐ Keep hot water on your boiler system at a temperature of 60°C or greater (for assistance on this please contact the Association).

Survey Questionnaire

The following tenants received a small monetary prize for taking the time to fill in the Tenant Survey Questionnaire:

Mrs Scott, High Valleyfield
Ms Hassell, Tullibody
Mrs Donegan, Tullibody
Ms Pettigrew, Oakley

Congratulations!
Calling All Tenants

Are you interested in learning more about Social Housing?

Would you like the chance to discuss and help in making decisions affecting YOUR home?

Why not consider joining us as a Member of the Management Committee at Ochil View?

I don’t have any time...

It only takes a minimum of one evening a month.

I have been a member for a few years now and enjoy being involved in the Committee and find it very interesting. I was made very welcome by staff and committee members. It’s interesting to be involved in the decision making process and knowing that I have an input into how the Association spend the rent money that tenants pay.

Lynne Brierley (Tenant Member)

Tenant participation is one of the key elements of an effective Management Committee. We have members from all walks of life with a full range of skills.

We currently have a vacancy for a tenant member - could that be you?

If you are interested or want to know more then come along to the office and meet us. We will try to answer any questions you may have about becoming involved..... we will even provide the tea and coffee. Simply telephone the office to let them know you are interested and we will be in touch to arrange to meet you.

I don’t have any time...

It will be full of “stuffed shirts” and I would feel out of place...

I’m not qualified...

If you are a tenant you are already qualified.

sorry stuffed shirts not allowed.

I don’t know enough about it...

no problem, full training is given.

I’m not qualified...

If you are a tenant you are already qualified.

It will be full of “stuffed shirts” and I would feel out of place...

I don’t have any time...

It only takes a minimum of one evening a month.

I have been a member for a few years now and enjoy being involved in the Committee and find it very interesting. I was made very welcome by staff and committee members. It’s interesting to be involved in the decision making process and knowing that I have an input into how the Association spend the rent money that tenants pay.

Lynne Brierley (Tenant Member)
Frost Alert!

Follow this advice to reduce the risk of damage and disruption:

**Keep your house warm**
- This will help to avoid burst pipes and damage to your home and your neighbours home.
- Remember that the pipes in a flat may supply water to your neighbours.
- In very cold weather, keep the heating on overnight at a low temperature.

**Protect your home**
- Report any leaks at taps or valves to us as soon as possible. Dripping water increases the risk of freezing.
- Reduce draughts by fitting draught excluders to your doors and windows.
- Make sure you have adequate contents insurance.
- Look out for your neighbours, especially the frail, elderly and vulnerable.
- Ask us if you don’t know where your water mains stop valve is.

**If your water supply becomes frozen**
- Turn off the water at the main water stop valve.
- Open all cold taps to drain the system.
- Do not open the hot taps.
- Turn off the central heating or immersion heater.
- Collect water in the bath for washing and wc flushing.
- Contact the Association’s Emergency Repairs Service.

**If you have a burst pipe**
- Turn off the water at the mains water stop valve.
- Switch off the electricity at the mains.
- Switch off any water heater.
- Turn off the central heating system.
- Open all taps to drain your system.
- Collect water in your bath for washing and wc flushing.
- Warn neighbours who may suffer damage.
- Contact the Association’s Emergency Repairs Service.

**Going on holiday over the winter period?**
- Make sure you have someone who can regularly check your home for problems and consider giving a key to a neighbour for emergency use.
- Let us and your neighbours know your contact details.
- Ask us for advice on how to turn off your water supply.
- Let us know your mobile number, so we can contact you and send you helpful text messages.

**Grit and salt supplies**
Where the Association has provided a grit and salt bin, we will refill it when the bin is empty. Please let us know. However, we won’t spread the salt and grit – this is your responsibility.

**How to defrost a frozen central heating condensate pipe**
In previous years, in the very cold weather, some condensate pipes froze and the boiler stopped working. If you feel sufficiently confident to know that your boiler condensate pipe has frozen, and you can reach it, you can defrost the pipe by wrapping hot towels or hot water bottles around the pipe. Contact us if you are unsure how to do this.
Home Energy Advice

Stay warm this winter

Clackmannanshire Council offer a free and impartial energy efficiency advice and fuel poverty service Monday - Friday between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm. Home visits can be arranged outwith these times.

Weekly Fuel Debt and Energy Efficiency Advice Surgeries are also held: See our events diary for details.

Call Clackmannanshire Council Home Energy Advice Team on 01259 450000 or email fuelenergyadvice@clacks.gov.uk for information.

Tips To Prevent Condensation In Your Home

- Keep your home well ventilated by opening windows every day. Please leave the vents on the window open.
- When cooking always turn the extractor fans on in the kitchen on a high power to allow them to extract any excess moisture. Leave the extractor fan on for longer than you are cooking.
- After taking a bath or shower the windows should be opened and extractor fans turned on. Keep the bathroom door shut as much as possible.
- Dry clothes outside whenever possible. If you use a tumble dryer to dry your clothes make sure ventilation pipe runs outside your property.
- Leave a small gap between the outside walls and furniture.
- Try to maintain a constant temperature in your home.
- Always keep the lids on pots and pans whilst cooking so that the moisture does not escape from the pans.

Welfare Reform News

From 07 Nov 16 the new Benefit Cap rates will come into force.

- The Department of Works & Pensions (DWP) have sent out letters to all those identified as being affected by the new Benefit Cap which should have been received in May with a further letter in September.
- If you are a couple, or have children, and the total amount of your benefits is over £20,000 per year, then you may be affected by the Benefit Cap. If you are single without children this amount is lowered to £13,400.
- If you suspect that the Benefit Cap may affect you, or you have received the DWP letters informing you of this, please contact Ochil View’s Tenancy Sustainment Team and we can provide assistance and information relating to this.

On 30th September, the staff of Ochil View held a coffee morning on behalf of MacMillan Cancer Support and raised £159.10.
Annual Report re-print

Due to a printing error, which affected the publication of the Association’s Annual Report 2015/2016, an amended version has been reprinted and is being distributed along with the Winter Newsletter.

Please note that this has been produced and distributed to tenants and other service users at no additional cost to the Association.

The Association would like to apologise for any inconvenience caused as a result of the error which occurred during the original publication process.

Customer Satisfaction Survey 2016

Ochil View has carried out a complete tenant and owner satisfaction survey. This reported the survey that was carried out in 2013 and 367 tenants took part, a response of 27%. The results show a small reduction in satisfaction levels. This is disappointing and the Association’s Management Committee and Involved Resident’s Group have considered the results of the survey and agreed an action plan to address areas for improvement. The main results of the survey are in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>survey result</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall satisfaction</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with repairs</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quality of home</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>+1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent as value for money</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neighbourhood Management</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owners satisfaction with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factoring</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>+2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Going forward we aim to improve our performance by:

• Reducing the average time to complete non-emergency repairs and offering repairs by appointment.
• Completing Customer Care training for all staff who deal with customers.
• Investing in our properties to meet the Energy Efficiency standard for Social Housing, also improving safety, security, and the appearance of our estates, and improving parking, where possible.
• Keeping rent increases to the minimum necessary and ensuring we get good value for money.
• Publishing, more frequent and more local newsletters.
• Developing a Customer Panel that is representative of our tenants in terms of age, gender and household type.
• A full copy of our Action Plan will be published on our website in early 2017. Contact us if you want a paper copy.

Got A Smartphone?

The allpay App is a mobile application (App) available to download from the Apple App store or Google Play enabling you to pay your rent from an Apple or Android smartphone. Scan the QR codes to download the app.

Rent Statements

The Association no longer sends out rent statements to each tenant. We can provide a rent statement on request, whenever you want one. Please let us know if you’d like a rent statement to be sent at any time.

The next Ochil View will be published in June 2017

If you would like any content or letters to be included, please send them to the office by 1st June 2017. These articles can be your personal opinion on behalf of a resident’s group or any other community organisation that you are involved with.

Email Address

Please send any email for Ochil View to customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk.

Your e-mail should receive an automatic acknowledgement, and we will reply as soon as possible.