

THE LOCHIL VIEW

West Fife

Investment Update

During the coming months we plan to invest to improve the quality and safety of our homes. This includes:

External decoration in Dunimarle Street and South Avenue which is complete.

Smoke, heat & CO detector upgrades to properties throughout our stock to meet new regulations are in progress and should be complete by February 2022.

5 yearly electrical inspections to properties throughout our stock to meet new regulations and will be complete by March 2022.

Replacement windows in Carlyle Street has been awarded to our new contractor, Timetra. Works will commence in February 2022.

Replacement aerial / Sky TV systems to communal blocks throughout and will commence in the coming months.



West Fife

Tenancy

Sustainment Team - WINTER NEWS

So far in 2021/22 we have helped a total of **683 tenants** with a variety of different enquiries, ranging from benefit advice to help with energy costs. Our tenants are better off by **£770,316**. This includes Housing Benefit of **£115,763** and Universal Credit of **£401,397**.

In your area this included helping **85 tenants**, leading to overall Additional Income of **£133,159**, including **£18,352** Housing Benefit and **£76,832** Universal Credit. This is an average gain of **£1,567** for each tenant we helped.

If you would like information on Benefits, then please contact the Tenancy Sustainment Team.



Ochil View Housing Association are partners of the Fife Housing Register and the new online mutual exchange service called HomeSwap.

Homeswap allows you to register your own property advert and search online for other tenants who are looking to exchange.



You can create an account, upload photos and search for matches of available properties by logging onto www.fifehousingregister.org.uk/options-mutual-exchange

If you wish to discuss in more detail or have any questions, do not hesitate to contact your Housing Services Officer.

Looking after your neighbourhood

Every 3 months we inspect your neighbourhood for repairs, general cleanliness, vandalism and any other issues.

Following restrictions during 2020-21, estate inspections resumed in April this year and have continued over the last 6 months. During July, August and September we completed 70 inspections (100%).

Throughout the majority of areas we visited, the main issues found were dumped items, landscaping issues and a small number of repairs. We are working to have these addressed as quickly as possible.



Do you have any concerns with your neighbourhood or would you like to join us to inspect your neighbourhood? It is an opportunity for you to tell us about anything that's not right. **If you are interested contact Vicki Brown.**



Robert Cowan, Tenancy Sustainment Assistant



Margaret Hall, Tenancy Sustainment Officer

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☎ 01259 722899

✉ customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk

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🐦 twitter.com/ViewOchil





Grit Bins

IDVerde have commenced winter service and all salt bins have been replenished with premium grade white salt.

The bins at Mill Road, Alloa are filled with a salt alternative to avoid the metal walkways corroding. Please do not use salt on the walkways at Mill Road. If you find salt bin to be empty let us know and we will arrange for it to be refilled.

**Questions or comments:
Contact Vicki Brown, Assistant
Property Services Officer**

Advice from the RAC on how to prepare for driving on ice

Firstly, think about whether your journey is really necessary.

Tyre grip is hugely reduced on icy roads, and braking distances are much longer.

Even if you avoid an accident, your car may get stuck – potentially leading to a long walk home. Traffic congestion is likely to be worse, too. If you don't get stuck, the driver in front of you probably will...

Before you leave home, make sure you pack a charged mobile phone (and a charger cable), a bottle of water, a few snacks and a warm blanket. If snowfall looks likely, a set of snow socks – high-grip fabric covers fitted over the car's driven wheels – is worth having, too.

If you're driving to meet someone, let them know your route and when you expect to arrive. Make sure the car's windows and mirrors are completely clear before you set off. And in cars with selectable drive modes, select the best option for cold conditions.



Keeping Cozy this Winter



Good news! The Warm Home Discount scheme has opened, and you could benefit from a one-off discount from your energy supplier of £140.

If you have qualified in the past, now is the time to re-apply as not all energy suppliers automatically renew their customers' special discounts each year.

We work with Home Energy Scotland who can check if you are eligible.

A friendly advisor will help you see if there is any other support you can get. If you're not sure, just call Home Energy Scotland.

If your circumstances have changed, and the team find you no longer qualify for discount, there may be other ways we can help you make your home easier to heat which will reduce your bills.

Or have a look online here:

<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>

Keep cosy for less this winter – top tips

With winter just around the corner, here are a few top tips from Home Energy Scotland to help keep you cosy for less.

- 1** Set your heating controls to manage the temperature of your home. Remember to use the weekday and weekend settings.
- 2** By regularly bleeding your radiators you will avoid cold spots and get the most out of your heating system.
- 3** Keep your radiators clear and avoid putting furniture against them. Drying your washing on the radiator can make your house colder and can also encourage condensation and mould growth.
- 4** Your room thermostat should be set to the lowest comfortable temperature (typically between 18°C and 21°C) Turning down the room thermostat by one degree can save up to £80 a year.
- 5** A quick shower uses less water and energy than taking a bath. For every minute you shave off your daily shower, you'll save £7 a year on your energy bills.
- 6** Use heavier curtains during the winter months and make sure you close them when it gets dark to keep the heat in and the cold out.



Heating and preventing frozen pipes

Ensuring your heating is working at all times is really important especially over the winter months.

It is important to keep your house warm and protect from frozen pipes. To assist with this in very cold weather keep heating on overnight at low temperature, report leaks to taps or valves immediately and you can ask us where your mains stop valve is located.

To make sure it is working effectively, please report any repairs as soon as possible to City Technical staff directly on 0333 202 0708 and allow access for your boiler service. We as your landlord have a legal obligation to service your boiler every 12 months. If you have any pressure loss issues, please do not top your boiler up and report this as there may be a leak within the boiler itself or on the heating pipework.



**HOME
ENERGY
SCOTLAND**

If you would like a referral to Home Energy Scotland for Energy Advice, please contact Margaret Hall, Tenancy Sustainment Officer



SMOKE ALARMS
SAVE LIVES

FIRE SAFETY

Have your smoke detectors been upgraded? If you think your property is yet to be upgraded, get in touch with us now. With the deadline approaching in the next few months, the Association will be continuing to contact tenants who have not made an appointment with us. It is really important that we keep your family, the property and the surrounding neighbours safe and it is a legal requirement for us to be 100% compliant by February 2022. All residential properties must be fitted with one smoke alarm in the living room, one smoke alarm in every circulation space such as hallways or landings, one heat detector in the kitchen and a carbon monoxide detector. These appliances must be linked so that if one is activated, they will all sound together so that wherever you are in your home, you will hear it.

The presence of working smoke and heat detectors has been proven to significantly reduce fire casualties and fatalities. If you have not had an appointment to have these fitted, you can call Leona Hens and she will book you in for the upgrade. Final attempts to contact tenants will be made in the next few weeks but failure to allow access will result in a situation where we force access to the property.

Scottish Fire & Rescue Service provide a wealth of safety information and advice on their website at www.firescotland.gov.uk. This includes important guidance on being safe during this festive period, particularly when it comes to things like cooking, lights, and decorations.

As part of their commitment to building a safer Scotland, they offer everyone a free home-safety fire visit. They help you sort out a fire escape plan and provide information about smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide alarms.

To book a visit, simply call 0800 0731 999 or text "FIRE" to 80800 from your mobile. Alternatively, you can visit <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/at-home/home-fire-safety-visit/>

Fire Safety - COMMUNAL AREAS

The Association has an obligation to ensure your building and the communal areas within it meet fire safety regulations. This includes ensuring that in the event of an emergency, everyone can escape quickly and safely from the building.

We have recently completed fire risk assessments of all of our common closes and this identified several areas for action including:

- Installing additional signage;
- Carrying out additional repairs to doors/access routes;
- Sealing potential routes for smoke/flames;
- Carrying out additional checks on common electrical systems;
- Ensuring cupboards and common areas are free from stored items which have the potential to catch fire or block escape routes.

We are working to resolve all these areas but also require assistance from tenants, especially where items have been stored.



Mobility scooters, buggies or bikes can cause obstructions to escape routes if anyone in your building needed to get out in a fire. Even small items such as door mats, bin bags, shoes or plants form an obstruction if it is dark and smoky as people may stay close to walls to help guide them if they cannot see through thick smoke.

To ensure we keep you safe, we will be taking a tougher approach towards all items stored in communal areas such as stairways, lifts, landings. If we find personal items, we will ask you to remove them and if you fail to do so, we may remove the items ourselves and dispose of them.

Remember:

- Keep all communal areas clear of obstructions.
- Do not wedge fire doors open.
- Place all rubbish in bins (where provided).
- Report damage to lights or fire alarms promptly.
- Do not tamper with any electrical, fire or smoke detection systems.

If you have any questions on this, please contact your Housing Officer.



Electrical Safety Checks

Our contractor, Magnus Electrical are currently making appointments to carry out electrical safety checks in our properties.



Is it a legal requirement for the Association to be fully compliant by March 2022 in ensuring all properties have a current

Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR). Similar to your annual gas service, legislation in Scotland has made this important check a legal requirement and action will be taken to gain entry to properties where access is not given.

An electrical safety check identifies any damage, deterioration or defects which can cause danger and by allowing into your home to do this work, it keeps you and your family safe.

If you would like to check when your electrical check is due, please call Leona Hens, who will be happy to help.

THISTLE
TENANT RISKS

Are your contents insured?

Remember as your landlord we only provide buildings insurance. This means that we do not provide cover for items such as your furniture, electrical goods, floor coverings including laminate or carpet or any other personal belongings that become damaged.

The Thistle Tenant Risks Home Contents Insurance Scheme is a specialist insurance scheme for social housing tenants living in Scotland. They offer flexible payment options such as a fortnightly or monthly basis. This can be paid by cash, at any post office or pay zone outlet, monthly by direct debit, annually by cheque, postal order, debit or credit card. Please note that fortnightly and monthly premiums include a transaction charge and details are available in the application pack

For more information visit <https://www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk/> or they can be contacted by telephone on 0345 450 7286

Partnership Working In The Community

We were delighted to announce in our Summer Newsletter that we would be participating in regular meetings with other housing providers and local Police Officers from the West Fife area. I am pleased to update you that we have now attended two meetings with partners, and these have proven to be very useful.

It is hoped that these meetings will enable Ochil View to be aware of any issues ongoing within the villages and be part of any joint action required. We are hoping this will provide a consistent approach for all tenants no matter who their landlord is.

We will also continue to work with the Safer Communities Team who work to deliver community safety across Fife. They cover a range of issues including crime, anti-social behaviour, public perception of crime and safety in our homes and on our roads.

They have dedicated officers who work with colleagues across the council and partner organisations to improve the local environment, make people feel safer and reduce crime, its causes and the fear of crime.

The Safer Communities Team has responsibility for the enforcement and issuing of fixed penalty notices including dog fouling fixed penalty notices, dog control notices, fly tipping fixed penalty notices and formal warnings of noise to name a few.

If you would like to find out more about the team or to report an issue you may be having please see www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/community-life2/safer-communities



Calling ahead for your upcoming repair



As part of our monthly tenant satisfaction monitoring, we ask for **YOUR FEEDBACK** on our contractors Logie Building Services and City Technical Services calling you ahead of your repair appointment.

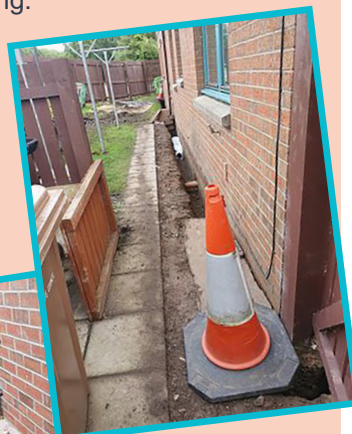
This is an area we are looking to improve with both contractors over the coming months, therefore if any of your contact information has changed, please advise us as soon as possible. Our office telephones are now back on and you can reach us on 01259 722899

Please be aware that operatives may call you direct from their work mobile telephone therefore please make efforts to answer as it may be to do with your upcoming repair!

South Avenue Drainage Works

Following a competitive tender exercise we are pleased to report that the drainage works at South Avenue have now been completed by ID Verde.

ID Verde were on site for approximately 4 weeks carrying out the installation of a new French drain and tanking around the perimeter of the building.



Ochil View staff out and about



Adele Rae, Assistant Housing Services Officer



Hazel McLean, Assistant Housing Services Officer



Vicki Brown, Assistant Property Services Officer



David Bishop, Housing Services Assistant



Marian Kelley, Housing Services Officer



Grahame Phillips, Property Services Officer (Inspections)

BULK UPLIFTS



Ochil View Housing Association subsidise the cost of bulk uplifts for our Fife tenants, a service that is provided by Fife Council. As of 1st April 2021 our subsidy is changing to £20 for an uplift.

This change does not affect the process and if you have any items you would like them to collect, you can request this online at <https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/bins-and-recycling/bulky-uplift-service> or by calling 03451 55 00 22.



Once they have processed your payment, please send us a copy of your receipt and we would be happy to reimburse you to the value of £20!

