

THE OCHIL VIEW

Find us on  

customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk
www.ochilviewha.co.uk

Hello again everyone

I can't believe we are at the Winter Newsletter already!

2021 has been a challenging year, with Covid continuing to impact on our everyday lives. We have embraced the technology available to us, for meetings and information sessions but I look forward to getting back to face-to-face interactions again before too long.

We have achieved a great deal over the past 12 months. This includes the launch of our digital allocation service 'These Homes', our continuing progress to get our new development at Elm Grove ready (*see pictures below*) and a revamp of tenant engagement and communication.

This edition is packed with lots of useful tips for staying safe and warm over the festive period. We also have some wonderful insight into days past from a tenant who is a local historian in Sauchie.

We also share the tremendous success of acquiring iPads and Chromebooks for 50 of our tenants through Connecting Scotland. These will be such a useful tool as they look to get back into employment.

Lastly, our staff have been working hard to make sure Christmas is a special one for our tenants. They will be delivering lots of daily giveaways in the lead up to the big day.

I hope you have a lovely and peaceful Christmas and wish you all the best for the year ahead.

Take care.
Margaret Baxter
Chairperson



Ochil View Donation in Safe Hands

We were so blown away by one special applicant during our Community Benefits funding window that we just had to help!

Banchory Primary 7 pupil, Derry Furby, called us directly to explain his vision for supporting and developing football opportunities at his school. He then completed his own application and emailed it through to us. We were only too happy to provide him and his school with £250 from Ochil View Housing for football equipment. We went along to meet Derry and his schoolmates, and he shared his story with us:

"Thank you to Ochil View Housing for this kind donation. We will look to get boots and shin guards, among other things, to help everyone be equipped to take part. I am a goalkeeper here at the school and hope to turn professional one day. My all-time favourite goalie is Lev Yashin! I'm happiest being outdoors playing football than stuck in front of a computer screen."

I also have three things I want to achieve in the future. First, is helping to find a cure for breast cancer. Secondly, I want to create a training academy for young goalkeepers. And, lastly, supporting young people get into employment."

Having met Derry, we have no doubts he will achieve in whatever he sets out to do. Good luck to him and all the pupils at Banchory Primary School with their future football endeavors!



How are we doing?

This year continues to challenge following restrictions on services and dealing with a backlog of repairs as a result. Here is how we performed so far in 2021-22:



Where we performed well:

emergency repairs completed on target: **99.67%**

average length of time to complete emergency repairs: **1 hour 30 minutes**

tenants satisfied with the repairs service **97.81%**

repairs completed on target: **97.88%**

repairs completed right first time **93.37%**

anti-social cases resolved: **98.2%**

current tenancy arrears: **3.74%**

% of annual lets to homeless applicants **32.8%**

Stage 1 complaints resolved within timescale: **98.63%**

tenancy offers refused **26.4%**

rent collected as a % of rent due **100%**

Where we didn't do so well:



average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs: **12.32 days**

average time to let a house **47.46 days**

Stage 2 complaints resolved within timescale: **87.50%**

Questions or comments?
Contact Andrew Gibb,
Property Services
Manager or
Linda McLaren, Housing
Services Manager.

COVID - 19 UPDATE



We would like to take the opportunity, again, to thank tenants and service users for continuing to adhere to government guidance, which is also being strictly adhered to by staff and our various contractors, as a means of keeping tenants, staff and contractors as safe as possible during the pandemic.

We were pleased to be able to resume all services from 26th April 2021 and to that end it has been all systems go to catch up on outstanding routine reactive repairs, our planned investment programme, landscape maintenance inspections and to, once again, advertise our vacant properties.

We were also delighted that, following further lifting of restrictions, we re-opened the office on Monday 13th September 2021 for appointments only. We also reverted back to our main office number of 01259 722899 on the same day. If you wish to make an appointment to speak to someone in person in the office, please contact us on this number to arrange a time.

However, as everyone will be aware, the pandemic is not over, and staff are yet to fully return to office working. Therefore, we are unable to advise at this point when the office will fully open to the public. We will however, keep tenants advised as soon as dates have been agreed.

You can still contact us by alternative methods such as by email at customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk or through our new tenant portal my home and, in terms of information, we would encourage as many service users as possible to use the Associations website www.ochilviewha.co.uk Twitter and Facebook pages.

We continue to appreciate the difficulties being faced by many tenants at this time.

Of particular re-assurance is that our Housing and Tenancy Sustainment staff continue to be on hand to assist anyone experiencing financial difficulties and to answer any questions on rent, housing benefit or universal credit.

Hopefully it won't be long now until things get back to "normal."

Wimpy Park Community Project Success



We were delighted to learn that the Wimpy Park Community Group in Alloa were successful with their ambitious plans to have the Beechgrove Garden team help modernise their park. We have been supporting the group as they smashed their crowdfunding target of **£5,000**. The makeover team have since helped deliver an amphitheatre and sensory garden, upgrade paths and enhancement of community orchards, sports pitches and raised beds. **A real community endeavour!**

Annual Performance Report

By now, you will have received either a copy or an e-version of our Annual Performance Report for 2020-21. This report details how well we are performing as a landlord and how we compare to other housing associations. The report can be viewed in full on our website or, if you would prefer a physical copy, contact Chris McShane as per details below.

Tenant Engagement Roundup



We have been holding monthly, informal sessions with tenants via Zoom to discuss a wide range of topics. These include our letting standards, the Scottish Social Housing Charter and developing tenant engagement services. If you are interested in coming along to a session and hearing what's happening with the Association, just let us know. You don't need to have any meeting experience to take part!

The question often asked when it comes to tenant engagement is: Why get involved? Here are just some of the reasons why taking part can be a positive experience:

- By telling us what we are doing right or wrong, we can better understand tenants' needs.
- Engaging with us gives tenants the power to help shape the services we provide.
- You can improve your own knowledge and self-confidence by meeting tenants and staff to hear what's happening.
- It can be an enjoyable experience! Meeting tenants and staff from all different backgrounds can lead to plenty of engaging discussions.
- If you are looking to get back into employment, being part of a group such as this can look good on your CV.

Contact Chris McShane on 07874 864 323 or at: tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk for more information.



Tenant Engagement Strategy & Action Plan

You may remember in the last edition that we highlighted the work behind redrafting the Tenant Engagement Strategy. Following consultation with tenants and staff, the draft strategy received approval at the Board meeting in August. It is now available to view on our website, as is the Action Plan that sits alongside it. We wanted to share some of the key information from each.



Tenant Engagement & Communications Strategy

- Firstly, the Strategy has a new name and new look. We wanted to present the details in a clear, easy to follow style that is also a bit more eye-catching than the previous version.
- We have set out **5 keywords** that we feel highlight everything that is important about tenant engagement and communication: **Opportunities, Connect, Help, Inform and Learn**
- We've detailed the benefits of good engagement & communication within Ochil View Housing Association. This includes helping to improve the services offered and ensuring we are clear and transparent with information being shared. There are also personal benefits for tenants getting involved. These include learning new skills, building confidence and having a positive experience.

We would love to hear your thoughts on this new Strategy and Action Plan. You can check it out in full at the Policies & Procedures section of our website, or on request. Comments can be made via our social media channels, or by contacting our Tenant Engagement & Communications Officer at: tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk or on 07874 864 323.

Action Plan

- The Action Plan sets out a range of measures for building and improving tenant engagement and communication over the coming years.
- These include exploring new methods for engaging, greater tenant involvement in the decisions we make and tenants and staff working together to help improve their neighbourhoods
- The Action Plan also highlights the training and support available to tenants looking to engage more with the Association.





COMMUNITY BENEFITS

we want your feedback!

We have implemented our new community benefits initiative, which will be issued to contractors, consultants and manufacturers when we tender our projects in future. We would love to hear from you with any suggestions as to how we can use this to best support our tenants and the wider community.

We are delighted with the response from contractors so far, with offers of team sponsorship, skip provision and gift vouchers.

Watch this space for an exciting announcement at the end of November for a Christmas treat for a couple of lucky Ochil View families!

Get in touch if you have any great ideas to share!

You can contact Ailsa Sadowski on 07936 948980, or contact us via facebook.

WE BELIEVE
IN MAKING
A DIFFERENCE



CONNECTING

SCOTLAND UPDATE

Connecting Scotland is a new, Government-led initiative that offers free IT equipment and support for people who need it most. We applied for their latest round of funding, which was for those needing IT tools to get back into employment. We were delighted to receive over £35,000 of equipment. From there, we worked with tenants to identify those who could best benefit from the scheme. iPads and Chromebooks, along with free wi-fi was then rolled out to 50 of our tenants. It is great to be able to help some of our tenants and we received positive feedback from many who benefited from this.

One particular story was Angela, who received a Chromebook:

"I was delighted to hear I was getting a Chromebook. 6 years ago, I was diagnosed with cancer. It was through my treatment and overcoming the illness that I got to see first-hand the incredible work of the NHS. As a result, I am now eager to begin working at helping those who need it. Just like I did."



Here are just some of the other comments tenants gave us upon receiving their equipment:

"I'm not from here and don't know anyone so feel really isolated. I can't wait to start working again and meeting people. Could cry with happiness!"

"You have been so generous with this scheme and it's going to make my life a lot easier. Thank you very much"

Thank you so much. It works just fab. I appreciate what you have given.

"Having an iPad will benefit me with my college work as I look to get my qualifications for future employment"

"Thank you very much for the laptop and wi-fi, it is very much appreciated"



Competitions & Opportunities

WIN Christmas Dinner on us

We are so excited to announce the first of our Christmas competitions, and this one is HUGE!



Through our community benefits initiative, we have received three incredible donations from our contractors, Alpha Comm Systems, Timetra and Logie Building & Glazing. The Association would like to thank these contractors for their generosity!

We will be picking **6 HOUSEHOLDS**, at random from our current tenant list, to win Christmas dinner on us! **The lucky winners will receive a £100 supermarket voucher each, just in time to buy Christmas dinner.**

Keep an eye on our social media pages for more Christmas giveaways!



Kids Competition



We ran a competition in the last edition for kids to draw their very own superhero and our winner was Kai Jarvie, aged 8. Kai might be at school by day but, by night, he's Super Covid Kai, helping people with the virus and delivering the vaccine. Good job Super Kai! Here he is with his reward, 2 craft sets from Toucan Boxes and a big stationery set to draw his future adventures!

Garden Competition

The typical Scottish summer of sunshine and the occasional shower helped create some beautiful gardens for our annual competition. It was a tough choice for our sponsor idVerde but, in the end, they went for Robert Martin's beautiful array at Baingle Crescent. Here is Mr. Martin accepting the prize voucher (on right). Well done Robert and to everyone else who took the time to enter.



Climate Change Champion

The annual Scottish Housing Day this year focused on the current climate change challenge. We ran a competition looking for green ideas that Ochil View Housing could consider for the future. We received a fantastic response, and our winner was Amanda Thompson. Her ideas included eco-friendly paints, solar technology, and rainwater gauges. Amanda won a luxurious eco-hamper for him and her. **Well done!**



Medical Adaptations

Are you having difficulties in your home with your mobility? If so, the Association can help you to arrange medical adaptations in your home.



So far, this year we have completed around 70 adaptations for our tenants by installing keysafes, grabrails, bannisters and showers. Adaptations are funded by the Scottish Government and you do not always need a referral from Occupational Therapy for small adjustments. We can fit grabrails, bannisters, handrails and other minor adaptations to assist you in your home.

If you would like to speak to someone about adaptations, please contact Ailsa Sadowski on 07936 948980.



Personal Packs



During the winter we appreciate that there is additional financial pressure on our tenants.

If you are struggling this winter or at any other time of the year Ochil View have 'Personal Packs' which, can be provided to Ochil View tenants who may need additional assistance or who are in financial difficulty. They can include personal hygiene, cleaning and baby products and are tailored to each individual household. You can access these by contacting your Housing Officer or through the Tenancy Sustainment service. In the first instance, you can contact Robert Cowan, Tenancy Sustainment Assistant or email us at housing@ochilviewha.co.uk.

SINCE APRIL 2021 WE HAVE PROVIDED AROUND 34 PACKS TO TENANTS.



Are your Household Details correct?



If you are a tenant, then it is important to notify us of who is in your household and when someone moves in or out. The Housing (Scotland)

Act 2014 brought in changes to your Tenancy Agreement which, meant that any changes in your household must be notified in writing to the Association. If you do not notify us of a change in writing, then it may affect your tenancy rights including succession or assignation of your tenancy.

If you have registered on our tenant portal, My Home then you can see who we have listed as members of your household and you can also notify us of any change on the portal if the information is incorrect.

For more information or help with My Home then please contact your Housing Services Officer.



Ochil View Housing Association are working in partnership with Clackmannanshire Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB).

We now have a dedicated specialist Money Advisor based at CAB who will work with Ochil View two days per week to provide advice and assistance to our tenants. The following is just some of the help and assistance that a specialist Money Advisor can provide: -

- Income maximisation
- Budgeting advice
- Debt advice
- Negotiation and representation with creditors
- Dealing with rent arrears
- Fuel debt
- Court representation
- Advice on bankruptcy

If you feel this service may be of benefit to you then please contact your Housing Services Officer who will refer you to the specialist Money Advisor.



Complaints & Positive Comments

We welcome all complaints and comments as these help us make changes and improvements to our services.

Here is how we did between April and September 2021:

- For 73 Stage 1 Complaints we resolved 98.63% within timescale (5 days)
- For 8 Stage 2 Complaints we resolved 87.50% within timescale (20 days)

Here are examples of how we have responded to complaints:

- A contractor supplied incorrect information concerning a recharge resulting in a tenant being advised they were to be charged when they should not have been. We apologised and removed any charges.
- A tenant was unhappy with the standard of work that decorators had undertaken to their home. We inspected the works, agreed the standard was not good enough, apologised and arranged for the work to be rectified.

You continued to tell us when we performed well with 43 positive comments during the same period. Examples of this are:

"Great service all round"
Existing tenant.

"I found the experience very easy, which I put down to all the staff within Ochil View housing. Everyone I have spoke to is very friendly and yet very professional. You are all doing a great job especially in these uncertain times"

Feedback from existing tenant on recent enquiry.

"Tenant said the operative was lovely and that she was happy he showed her how to work the light"
Existing tenant.

"Operatives were very pleasant and went above and beyond to make sure the repair was completed"
Feedback on heating repair.

"The recent contractor who fixed my windows and door handles was really professional, polite and respectful whilst working in my home. He explained all aspects of the work and demonstrated how the new window locks etc worked."
Feedback on repairs.

My Home Tenant Portal

Have you registered on our Tenant Portal My Home yet? 50% of our tenants have already registered and are able to access their tenancy information securely via the internet.

My Home allows you to: -

- View your rent transactions
- Make a rent payment
- View your recent repairs history
- View any outstanding repairs
- Place a repair request
- Update your details and contact information
- Request a meeting with a member of staff
- Report a complaint
- Complete relevant forms and documents
- View all correspondence sent to you

If you haven't registered, then please contact a member of the Customer Services who will be happy to help you get started. All tenants who register will be entered into a free prize draw for a £30 gift voucher.

If you would like to nominate someone to register your account on My Home and log in on your behalf, then please ask your Housing Services Officer about a Proxy User and we can help you set this up.



Questions or comments:
Contact Andrew Gibb, Property Services Manager.

Winter Warmer Information

CONDENSATION AND FROZEN PIPES

In winter it is really important to take preventative measures to protect your home.



Keep your house warm and protect from frozen pipes:

- * In very cold weather keep heating on overnight at low temperature
- * Report leaks to taps or valves immediately
- * Ask us where your mains stop valve is located



If your water supply becomes frozen:

- * Turn off your water at the mains valve
- * Open all cold taps to drain the system
- * Turn off your central heating or immersion
- * Contact our Emergency Repairs Service



If you have a burst pipe:

- * Turn off your water at the mains valve
- * Switch off the electricity, any water heaters and any central heating
- * Open all taps to drain your system.
- * Contact our Emergency Repairs Service.



Going on holiday over winter?

- * Make sure someone else can check on your home regularly
- * Let us know your contact details
- * Ask for advice on turning off your water supply



Tips to prevent condensation in your home

- * Keep your home well ventilated - open windows daily and keep window vents open
- * Always use the kitchen extractor fan when cooking and leave it on for longer than you are cooking
- * After bathing open windows and always use bathroom extractor fans during bathing
- * Try to maintain a constant temperature in your home
- * Keep lids on pots and pans whilst cooking so that the moisture does not escape from the pans

HEATING ISSUES

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

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.

Yesteryears Article

Chris McShane asked if I would like to share some of my old photos of Sauchie with the readers of the Ochil View Housing Association Magazine and I was only too happy to do so. I was brought up in Posthill, Sauchie in the 1950s and have recently been collecting old photos of the area through the Auld Clackmannanshire Facebook Group and delivering talks at the Community Centre. The first picture I have is Keilersebrae Woollen Mill, long since shut down and now home to Millers Lade Avenue, where I stay. The second one is Sauchie Primary School. That has now been replaced by Baillie Court. The third is another primary, this time Fairfield School. I had the pleasure of attending both primary schools in the 1950s. Happy days!

I look forward to sharing more in future editions.

If you would like to share your photos or stories from your area, please get in touch by emailing us at tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk or by phone to: 07874564323.



Peter Johnstone, Sauchie

Christmas Holidays

For Christmas this year, our office will be closed on the following dates:

December: 24th, 27th, 28th and 31st

January: 3rd, 4th

We will then return to work on Wednesday 5th January 2022.

MERRY
X-MAS

We hope you have a wonderful Christmas and New Year.



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE