

# THE OCHIL VIEW

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[www.ochilviewha.co.uk](http://www.ochilviewha.co.uk)

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STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS...

## OUR LATEST **MEET, HEAT & EAT EVENTS** ARE HERE!

**Thanks to funding, we can offer Ochil View Housing tenants who come along a fantastic range of energy-saving products, such as winter duvets and air fryers, absolutely free!**

We will also have expert advice from our Tenancy Sustainment Team and a host of external services on how you can reduce your energy costs. **Not to mention, plenty tea, coffee, and cakes!**

**Don't forget to arrange transport so you can get all your free items home safely!**

**OUR TOUR DATES ARE BELOW, FEEL FREE TO POP INTO ANY ONE OF THESE.**

**WEDNESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER:**  
3.30pm to 6pm - Tullibody Community Centre, FK10 2RU

**THURSDAY 9TH NOVEMBER:**  
3.30pm to 6pm - The Gate, Alloa, FK10 1DS

**MONDAY 13TH NOVEMBER:**  
2pm to 4pm - Tillicoultry Centenary Hall, FK13 6EL  
5pm to 7pm - Menstrie Dumyat Centre, FK11 7BL

**WEDNESDAY 15TH NOVEMBER:**  
2pm to 4pm - Oakley Community Centre, KY12 9QF  
5pm to 7pm - Valleyfield Community Centre, KY12 8RT



## WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

**Hello everyone, and welcome to the Winter edition of our 2023 Newsletters. I can't believe we are already thinking about decorating the tree and getting ready for a special visitor!**

Naturally at this time, we look back at the year before and we can be delighted with the continued success and progression the Association is making.

**One of the most notable highlights was our first ever Meet, Heat and Eat events in January. We were able to provide tenants with energy-saving products and expert advice from our Tenancy Sustainment team and others. The turnout and response from tenants was very positive and it's great to hear we are doing it all again, starting this week!**

Being able to help tenants like this is at the heart of who we are, and what we do.

As well as this, we have our first ever tenant scrutiny group firmly established within the Association's structure. They have completed their first exercise on the life of a repair and submitted their findings and recommendations to the Board. They are already hard at work on their next project.

This edition provides plenty of useful information for tenants this winter. We have a guide to reducing energy costs, staying safe at Christmas and even a festive stars competition!

*I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and New Year. Here's to a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2024. Take care.*



# BUDGET UPDATE

Despite making some tough decisions to ensure our overall financial position, we have still undertaken investment in key areas this year, such as:



**KITCHEN UPGRADES - £132,000**  
Starting October



**EXTERNAL DECORATION - £78,000**  
Complete

We had planned to upgrade several boilers however, on review, this has been deferred until next year.

As most of our programme for this year was postponed, we will now look ahead to next year when preparing our budgets and a final decision on investment will be announced in early 2024.

If you have any questions on this, you can call and ask for Andrew Gibb.

## Property Purchases

We are delighted to advise that we have successfully purchased 8 properties with a potential 9th pending from the open market. These properties are partially funded by our yearly grant allocation from the Scottish Government, which, has now been fully spent.

Although we do not have any remaining funding for this year to purchase any more properties on the open market, we can still consider other options to increase our rental stock. We will consider buying back any shared ownership properties or we will participate in the Mortgage to Rent scheme within our stock.

We hope to have the same allocation of funds next year to be able to increase our rented stock across all areas.



## Gas service and electrical safety check appointments



As your landlord we service the boiler in your property every 12 months and carry out electrical safety checks every 5 years.

Due to the high level of no access visits we get, we start trying to gain access at least 8 weeks before your gas service or electrical safety check is due.

If the appointment made is not suitable, just give either Tara or Ashleigh a call as there is normally plenty time to re-arrange the visit. We would rather this than attend your property and get no answer!

## Alteration & adaptation permission requests

If you would like to make any alterations or improvements to your property, first you will require our written permission.

Examples of permission requests include: Change to flooring, external decoration, internal doors, fencing, any external work to the property, CCTV etc. If you are in doubt as to whether permission is needed then contact us and we can advise you.

To apply for our permission, you must tell us in writing details of changes that you would like to carry out. We will reply with our decision within one month. In the reply we will inform you of our decision and, if there are any conditions attached, should permission is provided.

**CCTV: Please note that, due to data protection laws, all forms of CCTV require permission. This includes Ring Doorbells and anything that captures and records images.**

Written permissions can be requested via My Home, email [customer.services@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:customer.services@ochilviewha.co.uk) or by letter.

## Keep your home SAFE this Christmas

It won't be long before Santa makes his annual visit! To ensure you have the best and safest Christmas possible, see the tips below for keeping yourself and your ho ho home safe this Christmas:

- Never leave cooking unattended and keep decorations and other fire risks away from open flames
- Keep candles away from Christmas trees, wrapped presents, decorations and other flammable objects. Consider using flameless LED candles as a safer alternative
- Ensure fairy lights are bought from a reputable supplier and they are in good working order before use
- Always unplug fairy lights and other electrical decorations when you leave the house or go to bed
- Avoid leaving presents in unattended vehicles and ensure they are not easily visible from the street, preferably store them away somewhere safe
- Think twice about what you post on social media. Avoid details of expensive presents. Do not advertise if you are going away for the festive period and leaving your home unoccupied
- If you are going away over the Christmas period, make sure your home is left secure. If possible, ask a trusted neighbour or friend to keep an eye out
- Even if you are just popping out, always lock your doors.
- Secure any sheds or outbuildings, as they may store tools that can be used to break in to your home



# How are we doing?

All services are in operation, however we have seen repair problems due to our repairs contractor ending their contract. Here is how we performed for the year April 2022 to September 2023:

## WHERE WE PERFORMED WELL:



Average length of time to complete emergency repairs: **1 hour 14 minutes**

Reactive repairs appointments kept: **92.29%**

Planned maintenance works v programme: **109.22%**

Current tenancy arrears: **3.29%**

% of annual lets to homeless applicants: **29.66%**

Rent collected as a % of rent due: **99.90%**

Positive comments from service users: **274**



## WHERE WE DIDN'T DO SO WELL:



(New) tenants satisfied with condition of home on taking up tenancy: **90%**

Average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs: **6.09 days**

Repairs completed right first time: **87.62%**

Repairs completed on target: **93.33%**

Tenants satisfied with the repairs service **84.00%**

Stage 1 complaints resolved within timescale: **93.42%**

Stage 2 complaints resolved within timescale: **95.45%**

Average time to let a house: **27.00 days**



**Questions or comments? Contact Andrew Gibb, Director of Property Services or Linda McLaren, Director of Housing Services.**

# Annual Performance Report & Survey



Each year, we share our performance figures in relation to how well we are doing with things like getting repairs done right first time and handling complaints, as well as tenant satisfaction levels on items such as opportunities to get involved. All tenants are provided with a copy of this report, some will receive it by email if they are paper-free and others will get it with this Newsletter.

We also have a tenant survey that goes along with this and ask that all tenants take a moment or two to share their thoughts. There is a £50 supermarket voucher for one lucky entrant! You can enter this survey by scanning the QR code opposite.



# Complaints & Positive Comments

All complaints and comments are welcome as they help change and improve our services. Here is how we did for the year April 2022 to September 2023:



For 152 Stage 1 Complaints we resolved **93.42%** within timescale (4 days)



For 22 Stage 2 Complaints we resolved **95.45%** within timescale (20 days)



Here is an example of how we have responded to a complaint:

A contractor attempted to make a service visit using the incorrect access procedure and providing wrong information to our tenant. We arranged for a new appointment and reviewed access procedures and information with the contractor to ensure correct processes are followed.

We have a system for tenants to share positive experiences with Ochil View Housing and we continue to receive lovely comments. Here's a selection:

*"The electrician was brilliant made sure house was safe went above and beyond working into the evening to sort fault, returned next day to check everything was as should be. Very polite, one of the best workers I have had in my home."*

*"The workmanship was magic, 10 out of 10"*



*"I am really satisfied with all the help that is provided from yourself to help. I am extremely grateful for everything that is done and all the information provided."*

*"Prompt response and very helpful and polite"*

You can share your positive experiences of Ochil View anytime. Just give us a call, chat to a staff member or pop into our office.



**Questions or comments?**

Contact Andrew Gibb,  
Director of Property Services



# MONEY MATTERS

Here is some updates from Margaret, your Tenancy Sustainment Officer



## CHILD WINTER HEATING PAYMENT

Child Winter Heating Payment is a benefit payment for parents and carers to help with household costs for disabled children and young people. It's paid by Social Security Scotland. You do not need to show proof of how you spend the money.

**Child Winter Heating Payment is paid once a year. It's a payment of £235.70 in winter 2023-2024.**

If you have more than 1 eligible child or young person in the household, they'll each get the payment. In winter 2022-2023, the payment was £214.10.

### Who can get Child Winter Heating Payment

If you're under 19 and live in Scotland, you'll get a Child Winter Heating Payment if you're receiving one of the following benefits:

- the highest rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children
- the highest rate of the care component of Child Disability Payment
- the enhanced rate of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- the enhanced rate of the daily living component of Adult Disability Payment.

You must be getting the benefit on at least 1 day during the 'qualifying week'.

The qualifying week is the third week in September every year.

You'll be paid the Child Winter Heating Payment automatically. You do not need to apply, unless you live part of the year abroad.

You'll get a letter in advance telling you that you're getting the payment.



## COST OF LIVING PAYMENT

You will receive a £300 Cost of Living Payment if you have been in receipt of one of the following benefits between 18th August and 17th September 2023: Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Income Support, Income-Based Employment and Support Allowance or Jobseekers Allowance.

This £300 payment will be paid automatically between 31st October and 19th November 2023.

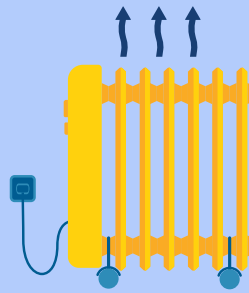
For those tenants in receipt of Tax Credits from 18th August and 17th September 2023, you will receive the automatic payment between 10th and 19th of November 2023.



## WINTER FUEL PAYMENT

### Eligibility

You can get a Winter Fuel Payment if you were born before 25 September 1957. Most people get the Winter Fuel Payment automatically if eligible.



**You do not need to claim if you get any of the following:**

- State Pension
- Pension Credit
- Attendance Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Carers Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Income Support
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- awards from the War Pensions Scheme
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- Incapacity Benefit
- Industrial Death Benefit

**For more information visit:**  
<https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/how-much-youll-get>

## MIGRATION FROM TAX CREDITS TO UNIVERSAL CREDIT



DWP have started 'migration' to Universal Credit for tax credit only claimants (those in receipt of working tax credit and/or child tax credit and don't receive employment and support allowance, income support, jobseeker's allowance, or housing benefit).

If you are affected, you will receive a migration notice and your tax credit will stop after the 3-month time limit if you haven't made a claim for Universal Credit.

**For more information, visit**  
<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

## WARM HOME DISCOUNT SCHEME



You do not need to apply for the Warm Home Discount Scheme if you get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit. Instead, you'll automatically get a letter telling you about the discount, if you're eligible.

Otherwise, you'll need to apply directly to your energy supplier. You might be eligible if all of the following apply:

- Your energy supplier is part of the scheme.
- You, or your partner, get certain means-tested benefits or tax credits.
- You, or your partner's name is on the bill.

The scheme is limited, so contact your provider as early as possible. Check with them, even if you were eligible for a discount last year. If you're eligible, your electricity supplier will apply the discount to your bill by 31st March 2024. You'll need to stay with your supplier until it's paid.

**Find out more here:**  
<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/energy-suppliers>

# Help is at hand – Cost of living

Ochil View HA have a small number of solar power banks available for our larger families. These are to help with running small electrical appliances – charging phones, tablets, ipads etc.

We also have Vodafone Sim cards available to give to our tenants. These come with unlimited calls & texts (to standard UK numbers) and 20GB of data free for 6 months. Tenants can then request to be considered for a new Sim card once the 6 month period has expired.

We have available a limited number of LED lightbulbs available to our tenants. These lightbulbs use less energy and therefore cheaper to run which should help reduce household bills.

**Please contact us to arrange collection of these items.**



# TENANT ENGAGEMENT

## TENANT SCRUTINY GROUP

Ochil View's Tenant Scrutiny Group are proud to announce they have completed their first review exercise, on the Life of a Repair. Over the last 6 months, tenants have looked at all aspects of our repairs service, talked to staff involved and held wider consultation with all Ochil View tenants. Following this, they compiled a report of their findings and recommendations, and presented them to the Senior Management Team and then the Board. The Board will now consider these recommendations and report back to the group on each. You can read the report on our website or ask any staff member for a copy.



We have been delighted to see the group evolve since the start of the year. Tenants members are given the independence and authority to review any areas of our service and it has been great for staff to work with them to identify any ways we can improve on what we do. We look forward to their next exercise, whatever it is they choose!

**If you would like to be part of this tenant group, just get in touch. You can contact Chris McShane, our Tenant Engagement and Communications Officer, via: [tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk) or on 07874 864 323. Or simply ask any member of staff.**

*In our last edition, we told you about our two new Customer Services Assistants, Nimi and Justine who are working with us for 12 months due to internal secondments. As well as her role within Reception, Nimi has been busy also taking on a Postgraduate Degree in Housing Studies at Stirling University since April this year. As part of this course, she has been attending the Tenant Scrutiny Group meetings and produced a standalone report on how the Association manages repairs and its consultation with the tenant group on this topic. We are pleased to say, Nimi has passed her course and will graduate in November! Nimi is pictured above with some of the Tenant Scrutiny Group members.*

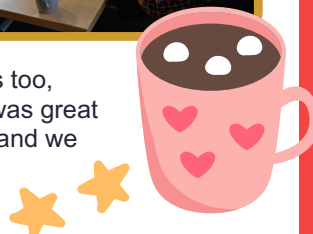
**Well done Nimi!**



## SCOTTISH HOUSING DAY

We had a fantastic turnout for our annual Scottish Housing Day held in September. Tenants were invited to pop in for a cuppa and chat about their experiences of being an Ochil View tenant. Staff and some of our contractors were on hand to offer advice on a range of topics. We had some competitions too, with prizes kindly provided by City Tech and QAPM. It was great to have a steady stream of tenants throughout the day and we received lots of positive feedback.

**Thank you to everyone who came along.**



# COMMUNITY Benefit News

## QAPM donate £2,000 to community benefit fund



As part of our recent reactive re-tender, as the successful bidder QAPM agreed to donate £5,000 to our community benefits fund. We have had our first allocation of £2,000 which will be used over the coming months to assist in hiring halls and providing catering services for our Meet, Heat and Eat events.

**Thank you QAPM!**



## Vouchers from Medical Adaptations Work



Through our contract with MCN Scotland for medical adaptations in tenants' homes, the contractors are kindly providing us with a regular flow of Asda shopping vouchers that we can pass on to our most vulnerable tenants who are struggling financially during our 5-year contract.

**Thank you MCN for your generous donations!**

## Dress Down Donation



The Tullibody Under Fives Group were the latest recipients of £400 from Ochil View staff as part of our dress down donations. Here they are receiving their cheque, which will go to a new climbing frame!



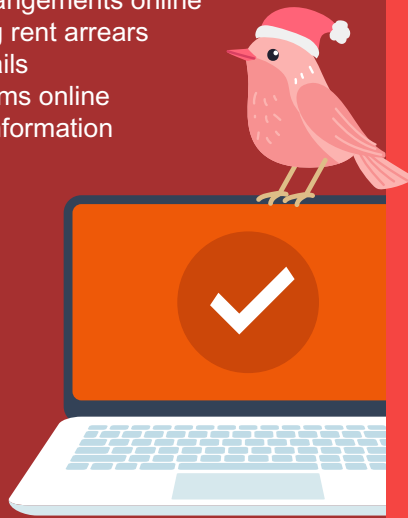
# My Home

My Home is available online to our tenants 24 hours a day/7 days week. It can be easily accessed through our website and is a useful tool for tenants:

- To report repairs,
- Make rent payments
- New feature to make arrangements online towards your outstanding rent arrears
- Update your contact details
- Complete and submit forms online
- It contains other useful information relating to your tenancy

Help is available and should you require any assistance or have any questions with My Home then please contact us. We have our friendly Digital Champions available to help you either in the office or at home. We also have a handy guide available on our website which runs through the basics of My Home.

Further information can be found at [www.ochilviewha.co.uk/page/my-home](http://www.ochilviewha.co.uk/page/my-home) you can contact us by calling 01259 722899 or emailing: [housing@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:housing@ochilviewha.co.uk)



# Noise App

Ochil View HA believes that anti-social behaviour is unacceptable. We try our best to respond effectively to anti-social behaviour complaints and that victims/witnesses receive appropriate support.

**To help with noise disturbance complaints we are now able to offer tenants the Noise App.**

The Noise App is simple to use and free to download, it allows complainants to take short recordings of noise that is excessive or unreasonable and report easily to us. Recordings can assist with gathering evidence to confirm anti-social behaviour has taken place. If you are experiencing anti-social behaviour, please contact your Housing Services Officer to discuss access to the Noise App.

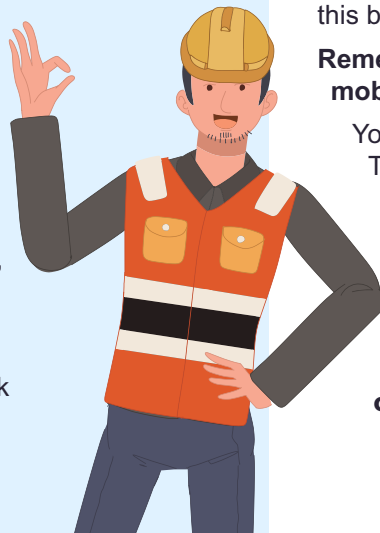


# Gas Quality Assurance

Every month the Association carries out a 10% check on all completed heating repairs and gas services for the previous month to ensure City Technical are carrying these out to the correct standard. Any issues are then discussed at our monthly progress meetings.

**The Association has recently appointed NICEIC consulting to carry these out and we would be grateful if you are selected for one of these visits, that you provide access.**

Should you have any queries on this, please do not hesitate to contact Ashleigh Brown, Property Services Officer on 01259 722899 or at [customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk)



# Adaptations to your home

**Funding for adapting tenant's homes is provided through The Scottish Government for our properties in Clackmannanshire and West Fife. Our adaptations service helps us fit key-safes, grabrails, bannisters and showers.**

We were pleased that this year we received substantial levels of funding however this has been matched with a significant increase in the level of requests to adapt tenants' homes. Combined with staff shortages recently, our ability to progress these has been slow. We have now addressed this, and are working hard to catch up on this backlog and we are sorry for any delays.

**Remember, if you are finding difficulties with your mobility, we may be able to assist.**

You do not always need a referral from Occupational Therapy for small adjustments and we can sometimes undertake these such as fitting grabrails and handrails. We can also help you contact the occupational therapy team for more complicated referrals.

**If you would like to speak to someone about adaptations, please contact us on 01259 722899.**



# STAFF UPDATE

In July, the Association said goodbye to Janie Taylor, our Assistant Finance Officer, who retired after more than 23 years in the post.

Janie was responsible for many aspects of financial reporting, including updating of tenants' rent accounts and processing and paying supplier invoices. We thank Janie for her hard work and dedication over the years and wish her a happy retirement!



Hello!



With Janie retiring, we welcomed Lori Ritchie into the role of Assistant Finance Officer over the summer. We asked Lori to give us a wee introduction to herself!

"I grew up in Kincardine, so I know the Clackmannanshire area well. I worked for a housebuilder in Dunfermline for 10 years, first as an office junior then made my way up to be a Finance Assistant before coming here."

**Likes** – Aberdeen football club (even though they are rubbish!), listening to music and spending time with my niece and nephew.

**Dislikes** – any sort of spider/insect!!!

Goodbye



# COMPETITIONS



## 2023 Garden Competition

Thank you to those who shared pictures of their wonderful gardens during the brief sunny days of 2023! Thanks to a kind donation from our landscape contractors idverde, Robert and Inga at Baingle Crescent won this year's £50 voucher. I think you will agree it was a well-deserved win!



## Kids Christmas Eve Competition

We are already starting to get ready for Santa's visit here at Ochil View and have a special Christmas Competition for our younger tenants! Inside this Newsletter, the naughty elves have hidden Christmas stars.

**Tell us how many they have hidden to be in with a chance of winning a special Christmas Eve gift box!**

Send your entries, along with your name, age and address to: [tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk) or by text, to 07874 864 323. Competition closes 15th December.



## Kids Summer Competition

We were giving away an Ochil View goodie bag during the school summer holidays and our winner was Ollie from Alloa! Well done Ollie, we hope this kept you entertained during your days off!



# Pet Permission

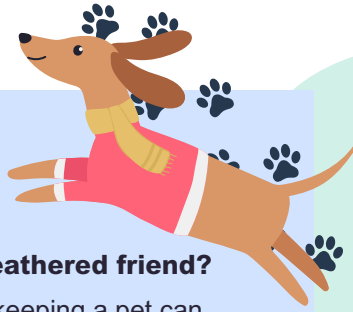
## Considering a furry or feathered friend?

Ochil View recognises that keeping a pet can offer significant health and social benefits to tenants however, we would like to make you aware that, to keep any pet, permission is required from the Association.

Ochil View will only give permission for domestic animals such as cats, dogs, house birds, rabbits etc. We are not likely to refuse permission to keep a domestic pet unless there is concern for the animal's welfare, number of pets already in the property and/or limits to the size of property.

There are also conditions to keeping a pet. These are that the property does not become damaged by the pet(s), they do not cause a nuisance to others by noise, smell, or fouling. We can and will withdraw permission for keeping a pet should conditions not be adhered to.

**We will not grant permission to keep farm animals, livestock or any wild animals for example ducks, pigs, chickens, or goats. If you wish to discuss any of this then please get in touch.**



# Christmas Holidays

At Christmas and New Year, we will be closed on the following dates:  
Monday 25th Dec 2023  
Tuesday 26th Dec 2023  
Wednesday 27th Dec 2023

The office will be open on **Thursday 28th December 2023 and Friday 29th December 2023**, we will be closed again on:  
Monday 1st January 2024  
Tuesday 2nd January 2024  
Wednesday 3rd January 2024

Office will re –open on **Thursday 4th January 2024**

**Please remember that you can continue to report emergency repairs through this period to either QAPM or City Technical.**

Call our office on **01259 722899** and follow the instructions to be put through to a specific trade - electrician, plumber, joiner, or heating engineer.

**Have a wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year from all at Ochil View Housing Association.**



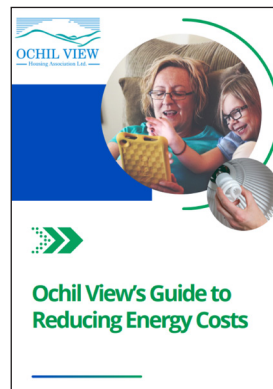
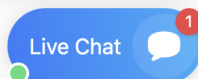
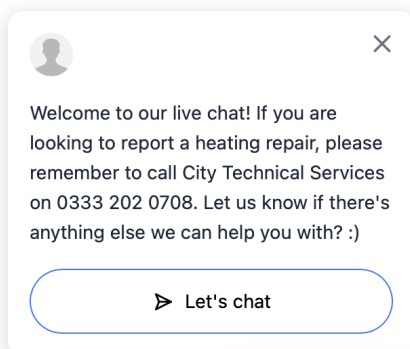
# Did you know we now have live chat?

Ochil View have teamed up with Smartsupp to launch a live chat function on our website and this is operational between our normal opening hours.

The function will get you in touch with our customer services staff to chat about anything you need information on or to answer any questions you have! So far we have answered 292 live chats with a range of enquiries coming in from this! 104 reactive repairs, 61 housing enquiries, 44 application/these home enquiries, 44 rent, 17 My Home, 12 planned maintenance, 6 tenancy sustainment, 2 anti-social behaviour, 2 finance and corporate services.

Just log on to our website at [www.ochilviewha.co.uk](http://www.ochilviewha.co.uk) and the live chat bubble will appear bottom right!

**Any questions on this, please contact Ashleigh our Property Services Officer on 01259 722899.**



# Ochil View's Guide to Reducing Energy Costs

As part of our helping hand programme for tenants, we recently created a guide to help reduce energy costs in these challenging financial times. The guide covers a wide range of things, such as maintaining the best temperature in your home, simple tips to reduce energy costs and managing energy bills. You can view this guide by visiting our website or request a copy by giving us a call or asking a staff member.

**Don't forget – our Tenancy Sustainment Officer, Margaret Hall, is also on hand to chat about any concerns you may have around claiming benefits.**

## Different Formats

We are striving to make this Newsletter as accessible as possible for everyone. Should you require a copy in large print, audio or in another language, please let us know by contacting our office.



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE