



# THE OCHIL VIEW

Find us on  

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



## George's Retirement

Ochil View Housing Association said thank you and goodbye recently to its Chief Executive, **George Tainsh, who retired after an incredible 30 plus years in post.** Board members and staff gathered in Alloa on 5th September in appreciation of George's outstanding service, leadership, and contribution to the Association's success over the years.

Margaret Baxter, Chairperson said

**“ George was Ochil View! He was the Association's first employee, back in 1991, and he has overseen our growth to an organisation that now owns and manages more than 1450 homes in Clackmannanshire and Fife. George's commitment and dedication have been second to none, and all of us at Ochil View wish him a happy, relaxing and well-deserved retirement. George will be greatly missed by the Board, Staff and the wider community. ”**

## Welcome from the Chair

Hello, and welcome to the Winter 2022 edition of the Ochil View Housing Association Newsletter.

Given the coming winter weather, and the retirement of 'Mr Ochil View' himself, you could say the theme of this edition is change!

George Tainsh, our now retired Chief Executive, has been the bedrock of Ochil View Housing since its very beginning. Over that time, he has been at the forefront of everything we have achieved. Among many things, we now have over 1,400 homes across Clackmannanshire and Fife. We have been awarded an Investors in People Gold Status and he guided the Association smoothly through the challenges of Covid.

It was nice to have a small retirement do for him when he left in September as it gave many of the staff and Board an opportunity to thank him for his dedicated service to the Association. He leaves with all our very best wishes.

With George departing, we carried out a thorough recruitment process for a new Chief Executive, and I am delighted to advise that Anne Smith, our current Director of Finance and Corporate Services, as well as Acting Chief Executive, has been appointed. We know Anne will continue to take Ochil View forward in the years to come. You can read more from Anne in this edition.

We have our usual packed Newsletter at this time of year. Inside, you will find lots of interesting and useful updates, news, and features on everything that is happening within the Association.

**Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year and I look forward to a prosperous 2023 for all.**



# Ochil View appoints Anne Smith as Chief Executive

Following the retirement of George Tainsh, Ochil View are pleased to announce that Anne Smith has been appointed Chief Executive with effect from October 2022.

Margaret Baxter, Chairperson, said "Following a robust recruitment process, the Association is delighted to appoint Anne Smith as our next Chief Executive. We are confident that Anne can continue the excellent work of our previous Chief Executive, whilst also making her own mark on the Association. Anne is a Chartered Accountant, with more than 25 years' experience working in the private sector. More recently, she has held senior roles within the social housing sector in Scotland, spending the last five years heading up the Finance and Corporate Services team at Ochil View and covering the Depute Chief Executive role. Since October 2021 she has covered the Chief Executive role on an interim basis".

Following her appointment Anne said "I feel very fortunate to have worked at Ochil View for the past 5 years with such a great team of dedicated people and I am looking forward to continuing my career here. I appreciate that there are considerable challenges to be faced at the moment for the Association and our tenants as a result of the current economic climate, but I am committed to ensuring Ochil View continues to deliver a quality service and positive outcomes in our communities and that we contribute

further to the provision of more affordable housing in the area".



## Scottish Housing Day

On 14th September, we celebrated the annual **Scottish Housing Day** by having an open day at our office. Tenants were invited to come along and get information and support on making their homes more sustainable, as well as the chance to enter competitions and have a cuppa with staff! It was absolutely fantastic to see so many tenants make it on the day, in fact it became a bit of a squash and a squeeze in the morning! We had brilliant support from our contractors, who kindly donated a range of energy saving products to give away. Angela from Bell Group even chipped in making the tea for our visitors! Tenants were able to discuss a wide range of topics with staff and we were pleased to hear many positive experiences tenants have had with Ochil View.

**Thank you to everyone who played their part in a successful day.**



## Staff changes

### Sandra Retirement

Sandra Marshall one of our Housing Services Officers retired from the Association in October 2022 after **24 years' service with Ochil View**. Sandra previously worked in Housing with Scottish Homes before joining the Association in 1998. Sandra has worked with tenants across most of our areas over the years.

**We would like to wish Sandra our very best wishes for a long and happy retirement.**

*“After a 34-year career in housing, 24 of those with Ochil View, I can honestly say I've loved my job and more importantly have had a huge amount of job satisfaction. There have been lots of laughs as well as lots of challenges along the way. I've been incredibly lucky to have worked with some great people and to have met so many lovely tenants over the years. I wish all my colleagues at Ochil View and all our tenants best wishes for the future.*

*Over and Out.”*



### Joanne Reid

We are delighted to announce that Joanne Reid joined the Association on Monday 3rd October 2022 as a Housing Services Officer.

**Joanne previously worked with Clackmannanshire Council as a Housing Officer and will be working across some parts of Tullibody, Alloa, Clackmannan, Cambus and West Fife.**

*“I am looking forward to getting started in my new role with Ochil View and getting to know the team as well as the tenants. I have worked in housing for 8 years so far and I am looking forward to continuing to support people with their housing.”*



# How are we doing?

We are now operating all services again following previous disruptions. Here is how we performed during April to September 2022:



## Where we performed well:

emergency repairs completed on target: **99.31%**

average length of time to complete emergency repairs: **1 hour 11 minutes**

(New) tenants satisfied with condition of home on taking up tenancy: **100%**

repairs completed on target: **95.58%**

repairs completed right first time: **92.15%**

anti-social cases resolved: **98.10%**

current tenancy arrears: **3.46%**

% of annual lets to homeless applicants: **31.94%**

Stage 2 complaints resolved within timescale: **100%**

rent collected as a % of rent due: **99.50%**

## Where we didn't do so well:



average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs: **5.23 days**

repairs completed right first time: **90.69%**

tenants satisfied with the repairs service: **85.00%**

average time to let a house: **26.03 days**

Stage 1 complaints resolved within timescale: **91.94%**

Questions or comments?

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



# Complaints & Positive Comments

All complaints and comments are welcome as they help change and improve our services.



Here is how we did between April and September 2022:

For 62 Stage 1 Complaints we resolved **91.94%** within timescale (5 days)

For 12 Stage 2 Complaints we resolved **100%** within timescale (20 days)

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

We received reports of our close cleaning service not being acceptable. We visited, and the contractor was instructed to rectify areas. We have also placed additional supervision on the contract to ensure standards are met.

So far this year, we received further praise on where we performed well with 61 positive comments. Examples of this are:



**"Contractor was nice and polite, and explained what the problem was - 10/10"**

Existing tenant comment on a repair by our contractor.



**"Greatly appreciate all that you have done and your involvement. You have been very kind and helpful, which has helped deal with a very difficult situation."**

Feedback from existing tenant on a staff member.



**"The workmen turned up on time and quickly found the problem and soon afterwards job was fixed. Both the joiner and plumber were both pleasant and friendly. Thanks for speedy repair"**

Repairs feedback from existing tenant.



**"Great service lovely people"**

General feedback from existing tenant.

# MONEY MATTERS

## DISABILITY PAYMENTS IN SCOTLAND ARE CHANGING...

All new applications for Disability Payments should now be made to Social Security Scotland. Applications can be made online or on the telephone:

- For Children under 16 years old - Child Disability Payment ([www.mygov.scot/child-disability-payment](http://www.mygov.scot/child-disability-payment) - **0800 182 2222**)
- For Adults over 16 years old - Adult Disability Payment ([www.mygov.scot/adult-disability-payment](http://www.mygov.scot/adult-disability-payment) - **0800 182 2222**)

Attendance Allowance (for Pension Age applicants) is still managed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and can be applied for by calling **0800 731 0122**

If you are already in receipt of either Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance for Children, Social Security Scotland will be in touch about migrating you over to the new benefit. Your payment amounts and dates will not be affected during the migration period and Social Security Scotland will contact you to let you know when a review on your award will be carried out.

If you receive other benefits or services, such as Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, and you are migrated over to the new Disability Payments, you must notify the benefit provider (Local Authority, DWP, HMRC or DVLA etc) of this change immediately or there may be an effect on your existing benefits, including an end of award. This could result in some benefits, such as Housing Benefit, being closed to you meaning that you will need to apply for Universal Credit.

## ENERGY BILLS SUPPORT SCHEME

The UK Government has issued direction that the Energy Bills Support Scheme, announced in May 2022, is to go ahead.

This will require suppliers to provide a £400 non-repayable discount to eligible households to help with their energy bills over the Winter Period. All households with a domestic electricity connection in Scotland, England and Wales are eligible for the discount. You do not need to apply for the discount, and there's no need to contact your energy supplier.

The discount will be applied to your monthly household electricity bill for 6 months starting in October 2022. You'll get £66 in October and November and £67 each month from December to March. You'll get the discount monthly, even if you pay for your energy quarterly or use a payment card.

Traditional prepayment meter users will get equivalent vouchers that you will need to redeem. Your electricity supplier should provide more guidance on the scheme before it starts. If you have not received your first instalment by the end of October 2022, you need to contact your supplier.

For more information on how you will receive the payments, visit [www.gov.uk/guidance/getting-the-energy-bills-support-scheme-discount](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/getting-the-energy-bills-support-scheme-discount)

**SCAM ALERT – The discount is automatic, so if you get a message asking for your bank details, this could be a scam.**

Here is some updated news from Margaret in our Tenancy Sustainment Team

Margaret Hall, Tenancy Sustainment Officer



## Other changes that have happened over the last 3 months

- **First payments of £326** cost of living support payments to people in receipt of Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Employment Support Allowance, Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support and Tax Credits. Second Payment Dates to be announced.
- Introduction of Adult Disability Payment for all new claimants to all local authority areas in Scotland.
- Migration of working age adults in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment onto Adult Disability Payment begins.
- **Payments of £150** cost of living support payments to help people in receipt of Disability Payments.
- **Payment of £130** to families in receipt of Free School Meals in Scotland.

## Future changes that will happen over the next 3 months

- **December - Payment of £130** to families in receipt of Free School Meals in Scotland.
- **December - Payment of £300** cost of living support payments to pensioners.
- Continuation of migration of legacy benefit applicants on to Universal Credit.
- **February** - Social Security Scotland to make payments of the new Low Income Winter Heating Assistance benefit.

For further information on any of the above please contact Margaret or Robert in the Tenancy Sustainment Team.

## SCOTTISH CHILD PAYMENTS

Scottish Child Payment will be open for applications for all eligible children under the age of 16 from Monday 14th November.

The payment provides direct financial support to eligible families and carers to help with the costs of caring for a child.

**From 14th November, children already getting Scottish Child Payment for their children under 6, will automatically see their awards increase to £25.**

There is expected to be a large number of new applications. This means people applying for the first time may need to wait to get their award, but if eligible will see their payments backdated to the day they first applied.



## RENT PAYMENTS During Christmas and New Year

Christmas can be a busy and expensive time of year, with the costs of presents and celebrations adding up. We are also faced with more challenging times with the cost of living increases and fuel prices, however, please ensure that your rent payments continue to be made, during and after the festive period.



If you miss any payments during December and January it means that you will start the New Year with rent arrears and risk legal action against you to recover the money due. It is a condition of your tenancy that your rent is paid in advance and in full at all times.

Ochil View want to make sure that you can enjoy Christmas without having to worry about money problems, so here are some sensible steps that you can take to ensure that this Christmas you stay out of debt: -

- Think carefully before you start buying presents and planning parties on how much you can spend and set yourself an affordable budget and stick to it.
- Make sure all your priority bills are being paid, including rent, gas, electricity and council tax.
- If you have any change in circumstances that may affect your housing benefit or universal credit housing cost entitlement, then it is important that you update the council or your Universal Credit journal immediately.
- If you are in debt and want some advice, then please contact us and we can make a referral to the Citizen Advice Bureau on your behalf or contact them direct.
- If you need any benefit advice or a referral for home energy advice, debt management, a food parcel or a bag of personal care items over the festive period then please contact our Tenancy Sustainment Team who will be happy to help.



**Eligible families, and carers can find out more and apply at**

**mygov.scot/scottishchildpayment or by calling free on 0800 182 2222.**

**career ready**



## Career Ready

**We would like to introduce our Career Ready student, Gregor Whyte!** Gregor is an S6 pupil at Alloa Academy and was selected for enrolment on the Career Ready Programme which partners young people with local organisations and provides an 18-month mentoring relationship. Gregor has been working on a project to deliver a £500 donation to his school which was kindly donated by Magnus Electrical through our community benefits initiative. In September, Gregor presented two ideas to the contractor on how this donation could be spent within his school. Through a "Dragon's Den" style presentation, Magnus selected Gregor's football equipment idea and the donation was delivered to the school.

**Well done to all involved and thank-you to Magnus for the kind donation!**

# Tenant Engagement Roundup

We've had lots of engagement activity since our last edition!

## TENANT SESSIONS

Our monthly Tenant Sessions are now being held in the office and online, following the easing of Covid restrictions. It has been great to have face-to-face engagement with tenants again and there's been plenty to discuss! In September, Tony Kelly from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service met with the group to

discuss how they can play a role in reviewing how Ochil view is performing as a landlord and identify any areas for improvement. **Lots more on this to come!**



## NEWSLETTER SURVEY

Shortly after the summer edition, we issued a short survey out to tenants to get their thoughts on the Newsletters we produce. This was the first time we used our new system - CX-Feedback - for a large-scale survey. We received a fantastic response, with nearly 250 replies. The responses were almost universally positive, the vast majority speaking favourably of what we produce. We've created a short report on the outcomes and you can read it on our website, or on request. Thank you to everyone who took their time to complete it.



## BREW WITH OCHIL VIEW

We were delighted to re-launch our 'Brew with Ochil View' back in August. This is an opportunity each month for tenants to pop in and chat with staff over a cuppa. Each 'Brew' is between 10am and 12pm on the last Thursday of each month. Here are the upcoming 'Brew' dates for the next few months:

**24th November / 26th January / 23rd February / 30th March**  
**All are welcome!**



## MY HOME OPEN DAY

In July, we had a special open day for any tenants requiring assistance with signing up to or using our My Home service. It was great to be able to help out those unsure how to get started with it or requiring help accessing a service. For those who don't know, My Home is a one-stop online service that's designed to help tenants easily report repairs, pay rent etc. Just get in touch if you would like to find out more.

We have Digital Champions on hand to help tenants get started. Simply call us and we'll assist you every step of the way.



## COMPETITIONS

### Schoolbags

With schools starting again in August, we thought it was the perfect time to offer tenants the chance to win one of several schoolbags full of everything a new pupil would need! We had lots of interest and here's one of our winners, **Karen Ramage, whose wee one will be all set for their big day!**



### My Home Open Day Winners

At our My Home Open Day, we had various prizes on offer to tenant attendees. Shirley-Ann Bremner won a £50 Asda voucher. Alice Airnes won a goodies hamper and we also had a few younger Ochil Viewers win some fantastic Lego sets!



### Scottish Housing Day Winners

As we mentioned, we were able to offer some wonderful prizes at our Scottish Housing Day thanks to the generosity of many of our contractors. The giveaways included slow cookers, air fryers, £100 vouchers, and one-cup kettles. Here are just some of the lucky winners from the day!



### Food Hamper

We have been collecting Nectar points on our company card and thought the best way to spend these was to give a little something back to a tenant and the community. **Frances McDade was surprised with a hamper of goodies,** and we also made a donation of several shopping bags worth of food to The Gate charity.



## School Fayre

In August, we were kindly invited by Alva Academy to attend a Charity Volunteer Fayre at their school. There, we shared the work Ochil View do and how it positively impacts on the communities we serve. It was a great experience and lovely to engage with so many pupils. We also held a competition, asking pupils what one thing is most important to them in their home. We received some fantastic responses and picked 2 pupils to each receive a gift voucher courtesy of Alpha Comms Systems.

**Here is Callum Beale and Summer Preston being presented with their prizes!**



## Workshop at Stirling University

We were delighted to be invited by researchers to a housing workshop recently at Stirling University. This was an excellent opportunity for us to learn how future homes can be designed to assist those with cognitive illnesses, such as dementia. 5 tenants and 7 staff members attended, and everyone found it to be an extremely informative and engaging afternoon. The interactive sessions included a VR experience and round-the-table discussions. We hope to arrange more of these in early 2023.



## Gas service appointments

As your landlord we service the boiler in your property every 12 months and due to the high amount of no access visits we get, we start trying to gain access at least 8 weeks before your service is due.



If the appointment made by City Technical Services or the Association is not suitable just give either of us a call, there is normally plenty time to re-arrange the visit – we would rather this than attend your property and get no answer!

## Property acquisitions

Did you know that Ochil View receives funding each year from the Scottish Government to purchase properties on the open market and take them back in to our social rented stock?

**Do you know someone who may be interested in selling to us?**

There's certain criteria that needs to be met and to find out more information contact us on 01259 722899 for further details.

## Can we help with adapting your home?

If you are finding difficulties with your mobility, please contact us to see if we can help.

We can assist with making small adjustments within your home to assist you by fitting grabrails and handrails. We can also help you contact the occupational therapy team for more complicated referrals.

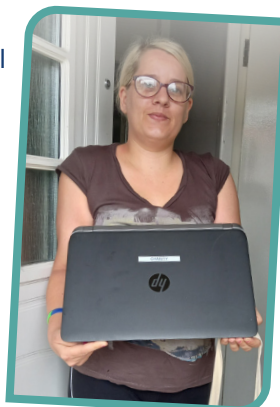
Funding for adapting tenant's homes is provided through The Scottish Government for our properties in Clackmannanshire and West Fife. Our adaptations service helps us fit keysafes, grabrails, bannisters and showers. You do not always need a referral from Occupational Therapy for small adjustments so please contact us if you think we can help.

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

## Laptops Donation from Bell Group

As part of our drive to provide tenants with the IT tools to help them get back into employment or further their education, we were delighted to receive 6 refurbished laptops, kindly donated from one of our contractors, Bell Group. We gave tenants the opportunity to apply for one and received a substantial number of replies. After careful consideration, the laptops were distributed to the lucky 6 and it was great to hear from them as to how it would be of such help. For some, it would give them the opportunity to finish their studies at university, for others it would help in their search for employment. One tenant, Danielle from Tullibody (pictured) said:

*"I am so happy to receive this as it will be of a big help to me as I go into my third year of a Social Work course. I'm getting use out of the laptop every day. Thanks again!"*



## Alteration and adaptation permissions



If you would like to make any alterations or improvements to your property you will require first 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 if permission is provided.

CCTV: Please note that due to Data protection laws all forms of CCTV do 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.**



## Free SIM Offer with Vodafone

It was announced in September that Ochil View Housing Association will be using free connectivity, via Vodafone UK's **charities.connected** initiative, to tackle digital exclusion across Clackmannanshire and Fife.

Ochil View Housing Association tenants can apply for the free connectivity, in the form of SIM cards with 20GB data a month, plus free calls and texts, for six months.

Please note, if you are using this free SIM card offer, you will need to change your mobile number for the six months.

**Please get in touch with us today if you are interested in applying for a free SIM card. You can do this by email to: [tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk](mailto:tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk), by mobile to 07874 864 323 or by simply speaking to any member of staff.**



## BROADBAND SOCIAL TARIFF

Did you know that many broadband providers offer a social tariff for eligible households who might be struggling to afford their broadband or phone services?

**More information can be found here on the OFCOM website <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs>**

## Christmas Holidays

At Christmas and New Year, we will be closed on the following dates:

**Monday 26th December 2022  
Tuesday 27th December 2022  
Wednesday 28th December 2022**

The office will be open on Thursday 29th December 2022 and Friday 30th December 2022

**Monday 2nd January 2023  
Tuesday 3rd January 2023  
Wednesday 4th January 2023**

Office will re-open on Thursday 5th January 2023

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



**SAVE THE DATE...** All tenants are invited to our outreach events in November, all between 10am and 12pm. Lots of useful info and giveaways!

**8th November** at **Tullibody Civic Centre**  
**10th November** at **Ben Cleuch Centre**  
**15th November** at **Oakley Community Centre**  
**16th November** at **Bowmar Centre**

Full info to follow!

## Ochil View Housing Association continue our partnership working with Clackmannanshire Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB).

Jade Scott from CAB is delighted to be working with Ochil View tenants and can offer advice with regards to rent arrears, council tax arrears, utility bills, and other debt issues you may be facing.

Help and support is available, confidential and free. 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.

citizens advice scotland

## 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