



Festive Greetings



Office Closure over Christmas & New Year

The Office shall close at midday on Friday 22 December for the festive break. We shall re-open on Thursday 4th January at 9am

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Selection boxes

Santas little helpers have been out over the past few weeks delivering over 300 selection boxes to children aged between 1 & 12. If you have a child of this age and have not received one, please contact our housing team on 01389 761 486, option 2.

"Hi, just a small email to say a big thank you to the two lovely housing officers who chapped our door earlier with selection boxes for the kids and lovely smiles to brighten my day up. It was a lovely surprise, and the kids are chuffed. I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone at Dunbritton a Merry Christmas and a further thank you for everything you do." - All the best for 2024"

Garden Competition Winners

Each year we ask tenants and their Housing Officers to nominate gardens that are looking beautiful.

This year we were delighted to award our garden competition to:

- Aileen Cairns, winner for West Dunbartonshire
- Mr and Mrs Blakey, winners for Argyll and Bute

Well done to both!



Welfare Check For Over 75's

Dunbritton continue to support and assist all our tenants, where possible, who may be struggling with the increased cost of living and the rise in fuel costs.

We also feel that it is crucial to remember and prioritise the wellbeing of our most senior residents. With that in mind, the Housing team have contacted all tenants aged 75 and above. The purpose of the

call was to carry out a welfare check, to see how they are managing, and to offer any help and assistance where required.

If you fall into this age group, didn't receive a call, and are struggling with the rise in fuel costs or cost of living then please contact the Housing Team on 01389 761 486, option 2.

Dunbritton Housing Association are working in close partnership with the

Energy Advice Service who have access to funds which could provide tenants with some relief during the cost-of-living crisis.

They can also support tenants to tackle fuel debt, reduce energy consumption and reduce household energy costs. Some of the items they can provide tenants with to help reduce their energy bills are things like, Air Fryers, Fleece Throws, Duvets and can even assist with carpets.

Rosneath pop up event

Dunbritton Housing Association in connection with Community Links Scotland held a pop-up event on Energy Advice at St Modans Church, Rosneath on Thursday 2nd November 2023 between 11am and 2:00pm. Tenants from Kilcreggan, Rosneath and Garelochhead were all lettered about the event, and this was also advertised on our Facebook page and on our website.

This event was attended by tenants and owners who were able to get help and advice on ways to reduce their energy bills. If you are struggling with your energy bills, please contact the office on 01389 761 486, option 2 for housing and speak to your Housing Officer who can make a referral to energy advice for you.



Energy Advice Service & Energy Costs - Update

With the cost of living continuing to make it difficult for households to make ends meet, Community Links Scotland have secured funding to deliver an energy advice service to homes across West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute.

The service supports households to prevent fuel poverty, tackle fuel debt and reduce energy consumption through better energy usage. We can also provide advice, advocacy, and support for households in fuel crisis.

As well as dealing with emergency fuel issues, the service focuses on addressing multiple fuel poverty issues, promote resilience against fuel poverty and support individuals and households to develop the skills and confidence to take control of their energy use and bills.

This support includes:

- Offering advice and information to assist householders to achieve the most cost-effective use of their heating system
- Providing information to help the household to reduce their energy usage and associated billing
- Developing an understanding of utility bills and energy usage
- Increasing uptake of grants and

repayment arrangements with utility providers

- Providing advocacy for those in dispute or debt with utility providers

As we move into the colder "heating" season, we can help you to operate your home's heating system efficiently and ensure that you have a level of comfort within your home at a cost that you can afford.

It is anticipated that households are going to be expected to pay an annual energy bill of £2083 from January 2024. With prices dropping to below £2000 in October 2023, this will not come as good news for the households already struggling to pay their bills.

This translates to a rise of 8% when compared to the October 2023 price. The levels of energy debt across the UK currently stands at around £2.6 billion. This is double the level at the start of 2020, and as the debt increases, a greater proportion will be unpaid.

As we move into 2024, we intend to proactively engage with households across the West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute communities by carrying out a series of energy information events such as energy workshops and energy cafes.

These events will allow us to provide a drop-in support service to assist tenants with any energy related matters.

The Energy Advice Service will also be facilitating a small appliance scheme and fuel voucher support on behalf of Dunbritton HA. Further details of both strands of support will be announced in due course.

Several of the energy supplier Warm Home Discount schemes have opened and if eligible for support, we can assist you with the application process.



Why don't you get in touch for a chat to see how we can help you?

Call us on **07957 626 497 / 0141 952 4382** or e-mail at **energy@comlinks.org.uk**, alternatively you can contact your Housing Officer on **01389 761 486** (option 2) who can make a referral on your behalf.

Close Cleaning during the Festive Period

During the festive period the scheduled close cleaning will be carried out on Wednesday 27 December 2023 and Wednesday 3 January 2024 instead of the usual Tuesdays.

All services will return to normal week commencing 8 January 2024.



Dumbarton Harbour Summer Pop – Up Event

Our Summer Pop – Up Event on 26 July 2023 at Dumbarton Harbour was a great success. Many residents and their families attended and enjoyed a lovely afternoon with face painting, tombola with prizes, games, the launch of our new initiative. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library, teas, coffees and cakes and stalls from West Dunbartonshire Energy Advice Service supporting households prevent fuel poverty, tackle fuel debt and reduce household energy consumption.

Waste Services from WDC also attended promoting recycling and waste management within the area.

Food for Thought - West Dunbartonshire attended and brought an abundance of school uniforms and food. A highlight of the afternoon was the ice cream van, Police van and fire engine!

Special thanks to Morrisons Champion Dumbarton, Tunnocks and Lidl Dumbarton for the kind donation of sweets, biscuits, bottles of water and crisps, it was very much appreciated and enjoyed by the kids who attended on the day.



Remember to Pay Rent this Christmas

At Christmas, it can be a challenge to find the money for all the additional expense that is associated with this time of year. Especially with the cost-of-living crisis and increase in energy prices.

Paying your rent is very important – rental income is a key factor in paying for the services we provide to all our customers.

Your rent pays for essential works to your home and community which includes:

- Improvement and investment work to your home and community such as new kitchens, bathrooms, and boilers.
- Our Repairs and Housing Services.

- Communal and close maintenance.
- New Build Developments.

Rent is due in advance from the 1st of each month. It is important not to miss a payment – even missing one month's rent can be difficult to get back on track – rent debt can quickly build and put your tenancy at risk.

We offer a range of payment methods including direct debit. Direct debit reduces the risk of missing payments, especially at Christmas. We are asking all customers to make sure that they do not miss their rent payment due in December 2023.

If you want to set up a direct debit payment, please call the office on 01389 761486 option 3 or speak to your Housing Officer.

For customers who pay rent by standing order, debit, or credit card over the telephone, please note that our office will close at 12.00 pm on Friday 22 December 2023 and will not open again until Thursday 4 January 2024 at 9 am.

If you are experiencing any difficulties in paying your rent, having problems with your benefits, or struggling with household bills, please contact us for help on 01389 761486 and press Option 2 and ask to speak to your Housing Officer.

Rubbish & Recycling

There continues to be issues in our developments with regards to rubbish and recycling including household items and loose bin bags being left outside the bins.

Loose rubbish and bin bags placed outside the bins makes the area look untidy and it also increases the risk of vermin including rats.

With Christmas approaching, we are aware that tenants are likely to have more rubbish including cardboard boxes and packaging and may be having a clearout in the run up to Christmas.

We have put together a list of handy hints for tenants to help maximise the bin capacity and keep the area tidy at the same time.

- If you have your own individual bin, please put a number on this to clearly identify which property the bin belongs to. This will help reduce issues of people using the wrong bins.
- Ensure that all cardboard boxes are broken down and placed in the recycling bins. Putting in full boxes reduces the capacity of recycling that the bin can take.
- Please ensure that you put the correct rubbish in the correct bins, contaminated recycling or food waste bins will not be uplifted. If you are unsure of what should go into your recycling bins, please check your local council website for clarification.
- If you are in a flat and have shared use of the euro bins, please do not overfill the bins. If other bins have capacity, then please use these. If all bins are full, then please take any excess rubbish to your nearest waste disposal centre. For the West Dunbartonshire

area your nearest site is Dalmoak Civic Household Recycling Centre, Renton Road, Dumbarton, G82 4HQ. For the Argyll & Bute area, the nearest is Blackhill Recycling Centre, Luss Road, Helensburgh, G84 9EE.

- Any bulk and household items should not be disposed of in the bins and should be taken to your nearest Recycling Centre as above or contact your local council to arrange for a special uplift. If you have arranged for a special uplift, please contact your Housing Officer to advise them.
- If any spillages occur whilst taking your bins out, please clean these up immediately.



Tenant Scrutiny Group (TSG)

Tenant participation at Dunbritton Housing Association is integral to our community-driven approach. We value the active involvement of tenants in decision-making processes, ensuring their voices are heard and their concerns addressed. Through regular meetings, consultations, and feedback sessions, we foster a collaborative environment where tenants actively contribute to shaping housing policies and services. This inclusive approach strengthens the sense of

community, promotes transparency, and enhances the overall living experience for all residents. We encourage tenants to participate in various initiatives, empowering them to influence the Association's direction positively. Their engagement is fundamental to our commitment to providing safe, secure, and supportive housing solutions tailored to their needs.

We invite you to join Dunbritton Housing

Association's Tenant Scrutiny Group, an opportunity for active tenant involvement. By becoming a member, you can directly influence housing policies and services, ensuring they align with your needs. Your insights will contribute to a stronger, more inclusive community. Join us in shaping a better housing future together!

If you would like to join our Tenant Scrutiny Group email us at admin@dunbritton.org.uk or phone **01389 761486** option 2.



Armchair Critics Group (ACG)

We are thrilled to extend an invitation to all our esteemed tenants to join the Dunbritton Housing Association Armchair Critics Group (ACG). At Dunbritton Housing Association, we value your opinions and believe in the power of open dialogue. The ACG is a unique platform created exclusively for our tenants to voice their thoughts, offer feedback, and actively participate in shaping our policies for the future from the comfort of their own home. The ACG is a community-driven initiative designed to encourage active participation from every tenant within Dunbritton Housing Association. It serves as a collective voice, allowing you

to express your thoughts, share insights, and contribute ideas on various aspects of community living.

The Armchair Critics initiative caters to tenants passionate about community involvement. It's ideal for residents eager to voice their opinions, suggest improvements, and actively shape our future without leaving their own home. If you're enthusiastic about positive change, creative solutions, and enhancing our community, this platform is designed for your active participation. Join us in making a difference! If this sounds like you, express your interest by emailing admin@dunbritton.org.uk or call **01389 761486** option 2.



Direct Contact with Your Housing Officer

We know how important it is for tenants to be able to get in contact with their Housing Officer. Housing Officers are here to help you manage your rent account, discuss a move (transfer), ensure your estate is maintained and assist with any neighbour disputes.

Your Housing Officer is available at our new office or by telephoning through their office direct dial or through their dedicated mobile:



**Lyndsey McGillion,
Housing Officer for
Helensburgh**

Direct dial -
01389 310890

Mobile number -
07717 782 791



**Sharon Kane,
Housing Officer for
Alexandria**

Direct dial -
01389 310891

Mobile number -
07717 792 894



**Lindsey Reid,
Joint Housing
Officer for the
Lochside and
Dumbarton**

Direct dial -
01389 310892

Mobile number -
07976 708 077



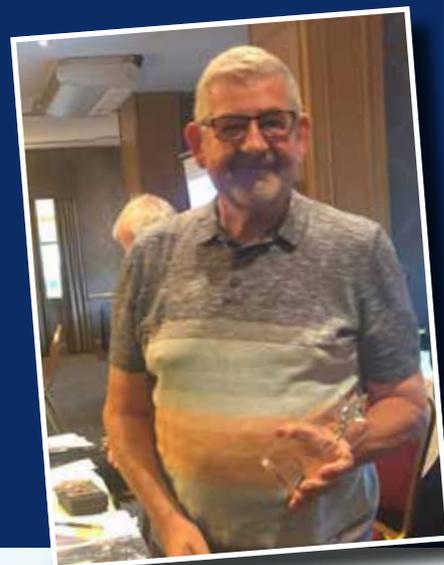
**Kirsty McGlashan,
Joint Housing
Officer for the
Lochside and
Dumbarton**

Direct dial -
01389 310908

Mobile number -
07717 762 843

Good neighbour award

Mr Keith Jackson from our Clydeview Development in Helensburgh collected our good neighbour award. Keith was nominated for this award as over the summer months he has helped a fellow neighbour fix their raised flower bed and maintain the plot. Keith and his wife Rhona have been a great help and support to their neighbours and friends.



New Tenants - Jim and Angela Rafferty

Earlier this year Jim and Angela along with their dog Poppy were delighted to view and accept an offer of housing from Dunbritton. The property was just what they needed and both say they feel settled and happy in their new home. Welcome to Dunbritton!



Improvements to our Homes

Our Asset Management Team has been working hard with our contractors to keep our properties looking their best, both inside and out. Recent upgrade works include:

Exterior Painting Works

Bell Decorating Group carried out exterior painting of our properties in Garelochhead and Roseneath.

Tenants were contacted to advise of the programme, and duration of the works. The maintenance officer also spoke with tenants on site to supply information on the contract details.

Buildings, stairways, and pathways were power washed in preparation for the works, removing fungal growth and debris from the area.

There were a few issues with parking, and we appreciate the help given by our tenants to facilitate access.



Feorlinbreck Before



Feorlinbreck after



The Cottages before



The Cottages after

Kitchen Installations Garelochhead

BRB Ltd completed kitchen renewals at 37 of our properties in Garelochhead. Tenants were asked to select from a choice of 3 colours of worktop and cabinets.

Works were completed over two day period and any associated work to the floors and walls carried out by the contractor while on site. Electrics and plumbing were also upgraded and certification provided on completion and inspection.



Contents Insurance

It is vital that you have insurance in place for your home as the Association does not provide insurance coverage for your household furniture, floor coverings and effects. For further

information please contact our office on 01389 761 486 (selecting option 2).

Please note that the Association is not liable for damage to the contents of your home.



Emergency arrangements over the holiday period



Our office will be closed from 12 noon on Friday 22nd December 2023 until 9 am, Thursday 4th January 2024.

During this period, only Emergency repairs will be carried out. Emergency repairs should be reported to our out of hours service, Hanover Telecare on **0131 524 1418**. Please state clearly that you are a Dunbritton Housing Association tenant and that you are reporting an emergency repair.

EMERGENCY REPAIRS:

- Loss of heating where there is no other form of heating available.
- Major water leak or flood within the property (or flat above)
- Loss of electrical power or lighting

or electrical fault which may endanger a building or resident (but not a power cut from the electricity grid)

- Burst radiator (but not a minor leak)
- Insecure property
- Broken windows
- Broken/blocked WC (if only one WC is in the house)
- Blocked drains
- Total common stair lighting failure
- Safety-related problem
- Smoke alarm/carbon monoxide detector continually beeping but only after batteries have been replaced and eliminated as a fault.

In the event that Hanover can't be contacted, please call contractors

directly: (Hanover must be the first point of call)

1. Electrical emergencies: Ledgerwood Electrical **01389 752944 (07703125702/3)**
2. Gas Heating and Plumbing repairs: City Technical Services **0333 2020 708**
3. Central Timber Construction **01436 677930 (07384220296)**

OTHER EMERGENCIES:

- In the event of a fire, please contact the emergency services on 999 immediately.
- If you notice a Gas leak, please contact the national gas emergency number immediately on **0800 111 999**

Avoid the misery of frozen pipes

During the winter season, it is advisable to take precautions to avoid frozen pipes.

- Please ensure you know where your mains water stop valve is located, and that you can turn it off and on.

If you will not be at home during the winter period:

- Leave your heating on at a low temperature as this will help to stop pipes from freezing.
- Open your loft hatch door. This will allow warm air from other parts of the house to circulate in the loft and help prevent pipes from freezing.

If your pipes are frozen:

- Turn off the water at the main stopcock.
- Call the emergency repairs number.

If a pipe has burst:

- Turn off the water at the main stopcock.
- Call the emergency repairs number.
- If water is coming through the ceiling, collect it in a bucket to reduce any damage to floor coverings.
- If wiring or any electrical appliance has been affected, do not touch them until advised to do so by an electrician.
- If in doubt, turn off your electricity at the mains.
- Remove belonging from the affected area.

Drying out:

- Leave windows, doors, and built-in cupboards open during the day if possible.
- Keep the affected rooms heated.

Asset Team news

Our Asset Manager, Paul Sweeney, along with our Asset Officers: Jim Cannon and Greg Marley, have recently completed the Property Care Association surveyor's course.

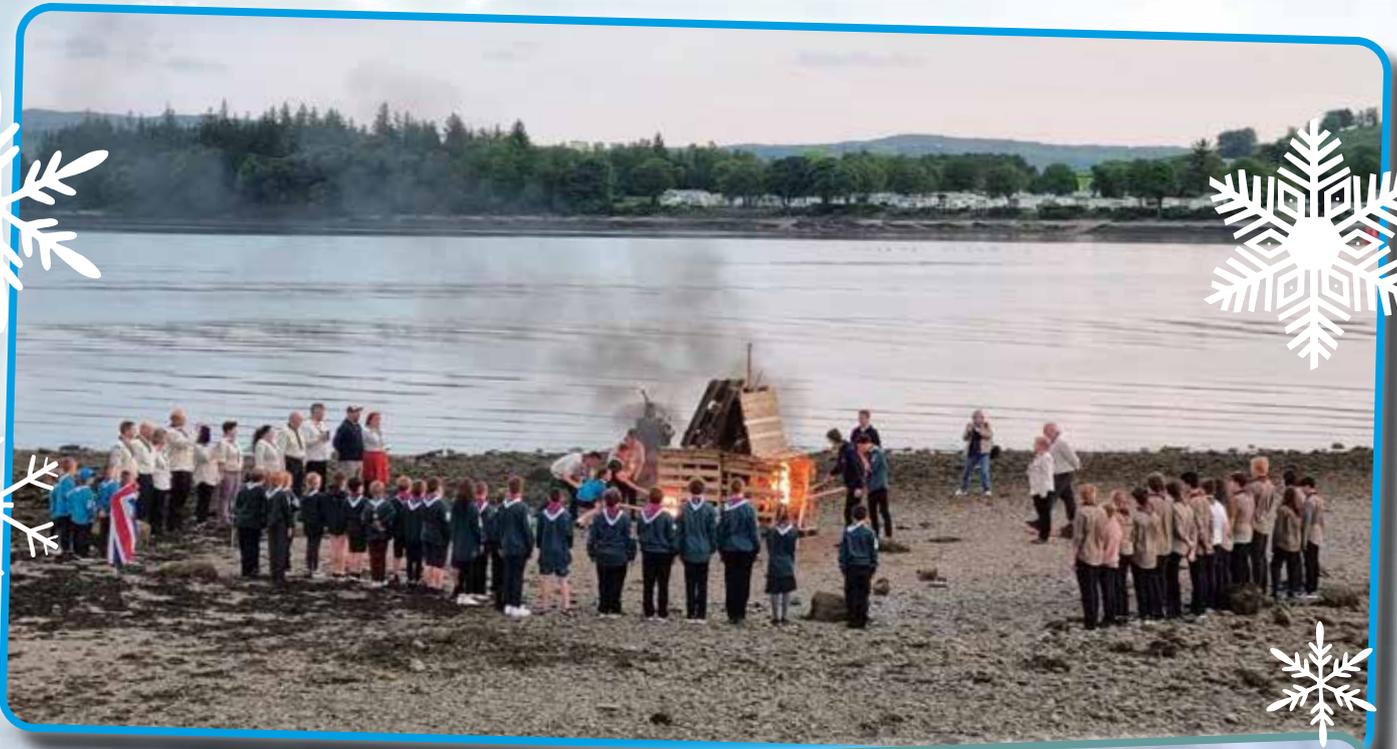
This intensive course focused on key areas of health and safety and property maintenance including modules on:

- Timber and Dampness in Buildings
- Dampness Diagnosis and Control
- Report Preparation, Legal Safety and Environmental Considerations

Through this course, our Asset Team have enhanced their knowledge on health, safety, and dampness control; and will pass the benefit of their experience on to our tenants.

Community Support Fund

Each Year Dunbritton's Community Support Panel works to support community engagement groups across all of our areas. This helps to increase inclusion and help develop groups that benefit the areas in which we live. We have recently issued grants to help the Helensburgh Scouts, the local primary and secondary schools deliver key projects and numerous local football teams.



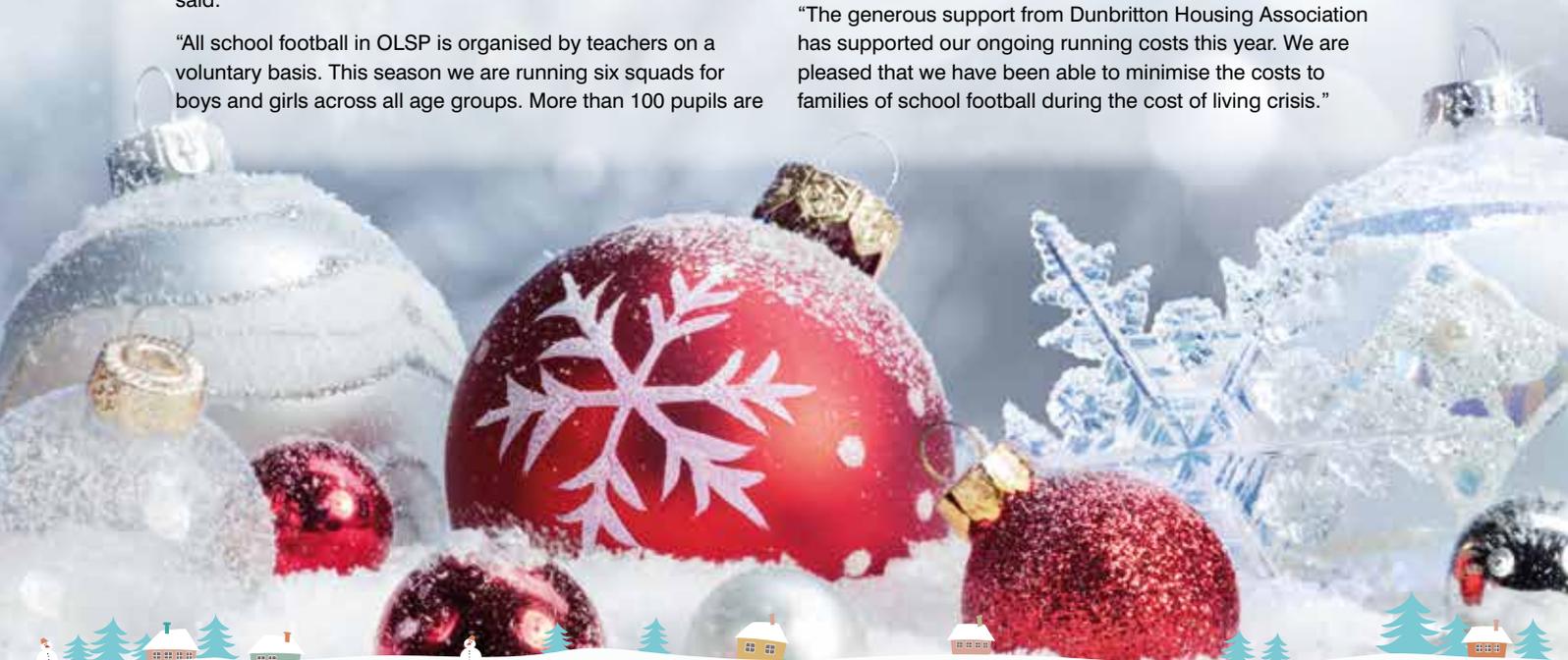


Our Lady & Saint Patrick's High School teacher Simon Hutton said:

"All school football in OLSP is organised by teachers on a voluntary basis. This season we are running six squads for boys and girls across all age groups. More than 100 pupils are

involved in representing the school in the Glasgow League."

"The generous support from Dunbritton Housing Association has supported our ongoing running costs this year. We are pleased that we have been able to minimise the costs to families of school football during the cost of living crisis."



Annual General Meeting

In September we again hosted our Annual General Meeting.

This is an essential part of the Dunbritton calendar and provides the opportunity for members of the Association to come along and find out more about how the organisation has been performing and our plans for the coming year.

Our accountants provided details on the financial standing of the organisation, and the CEO and

Chair detailed on how we have performed in comparison to previous years and benchmarked against other associations within the sector. They confirmed that it has been another successful year for Dunbritton, with high performance across all our key indicators.

The association remains focused on providing a quality service to our tenants and always aspires to provide value for money.

Staff Awards

Each year we hand out awards that recognise the hard work and dedication of members of our staffing team. This year at the AGM, we were delighted to recognise Sharon Kane and Greg Marley.

Sharon picked up our Customer Focus Award, this recognised her hard work as a Housing Officer, looking after our tenants across Alexandria.

Greg received our Above and Beyond Award, in appreciation of his hard work and commitment in our Asset Management Team.



Sonja Aitken

After many years of service, one of our longest-standing board members has decided to stand down. Sonja Aitken has worked tirelessly on the Board since 2007 and has participated in many of the important milestones that Dunbritton has reached over these years. This has included some of our key developments, such as Logie Place, Clydeview, Hermitage, Walker Place, Bruce Court, and Dumbarton Harbour.

Sonja's contribution as a valued Board Member will be missed by both her colleagues on the Board and staff. Sonja will always have a home at Dunbritton and we wish her well for the future.



Spreading Joy:



Dunbritton Staff Purchase Toys to Donate To Our Local Foodbank's Toy Drive For Christmas

As we approach the festive season, there's no better time to come together to give back to our community. We are delighted to share that our kind-hearted staff at Dunbritton helped to spread joy by purchasing toys to donate to "Food for Thought, West Dunbartonshire."

Food for Thought is a local organisation dedicated to supporting families in need within the West Dunbartonshire area.

We firmly believe in the importance of giving back to the communities we serve, and the holiday season provides the perfect opportunity to do just that. Our

staff members have shown tremendous generosity in contributing to this cause. By purchasing toys and gifts for the children served by Food For Thought, we are not only putting smiles on their faces but also providing them with a sense of warmth and belonging during this special time of year. "



Gold Award Winners!!

For the last three years, the team at Dunbritton have been working with IIP to look at our working practices and to help ensure that the Dunbritton office is a great place to work.



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE | Gold

We were delighted to receive the gold investors in people award in November.

We are committed to developing our staff, both to advance their career and to ensure our tenants are receiving the best service, and working with IIP offered us an excellent opportunity to have some fresh input into how we are performing.





MacMillan Coffee Morning

Each year we host a Coffee Morning in support of Macmillan cancer support.

Staff and board members have again been busy baking up some delicacies, and we were delighted to raise £180 for a great cause. It was also a great opportunity to welcome tenants into our office, and to enjoy a relaxing chat, as well as eating some cake. A big thank you to everyone that was involved from those that baked to those that popped round and donated.



Halloween

Every Friday we have a dress down day in the office, with staff donating £1 to our charities to take part. This year, these donations have gone to our Common Good Fund which looks to help tenants in need.

Halloween offered us a great opportunity to be creative on our dress down day, and the team went to great lengths to look their spookiest. The day was a great success, with everyone particularly enjoying the Halloween cakes, whilst raising money for a truly worthwhile cause.

COMMON GOOD FUND

In the face of continued economic uncertainty, staff at Dunbritton have been committed to supporting our tenants, through the Common Good Fund. The fund is made up of financial contributions from the Association's contractors, the Association and fund raising and individual donations from staff.

22 tenants and families have been given a much-needed boost to their household income since the fund started in October 2023.

Tenants who have been affected by the cost-of-living crisis have been nominated by staff. Some of our tenants have had to choose between heating their home or purchasing food and other essentials. We hope that the money donated has provided those in receipt of funds, some breathing space.

The funds from staff continue to be received from direct donations and Dress Down Friday income.

During the festive season, we will be looking for different ways to raise funds to support our tenants during the next year.

Changes within our Finance Team

We were sad to say goodbye to Kevin Downie, our Finance Assistant. As detailed in previous newsletters, Kevin had been working hard to secure a degree in accountancy, and following this achievement, Kevin has now secured for himself a job as an accountant.

This created a vacancy within our team, and we are delighted to welcome onboard Mariana Reilly.

Mariana joins us with an extensive background in finance administration and customer service attained both in the UK and overseas. Over the past 5 years, she has worked in the finance department at various technology and food manufacturing companies based in New Zealand and London.

Mariana is excited to further develop her career within the housing industry at Dunbritton as a Finance Assistant. She will be available to support tenants with finance-related queries over the phone, e-mail, and onsite at our office.



CHRISTMAS COLOURING COMPETITION

£50
PRIZE



Entrances should be posted to our office at 1 Hatters Lane, Dumbarton, G82 1AW,
or e-mail to admin@dunbritton.org.uk by 31 January 2024.

Name:

Guardian's Name:

Address:

Contact Number:



Festive message from Allan Murphy C.E.O.

The last twelve months seem to have flown by, and I cannot believe that we are fast approaching the Festive season.



Once again It has been a difficult year for everyone we have had to deal with the full impact of the cost of living crisis, fuel poverty, and Brexit.

The Association has certainly felt the impact of increased good and service costs; however, I am proud of the hard work and dedication of both staff and Board in ensuring we continue to deliver a great quality of service.

During the year we have looked to develop our Tenant Participation, and I am delighted to have seen the Tenant Scrutiny Panel develop and now have some established core members. We will be working closely with these in the coming year to ensure it grows further. I would like to thank all the tenants who have given their time and input this year to assist the Association in further improving our services.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Board and all of the Dunbritton team to wish everyone a happy Festive period.

Our staff team has gone above and beyond this year, developing new initiatives to support and assist our tenants. As you will have read, they have run coffee mornings, dressed up and dressed down, all to raise money to help our tenants in the highest need. Our Common Good Fund has helped support tenants through donations, whilst our Community Support Panel has assisted in the running of local groups and organisations.

I would encourage all tenants who feel they may be struggling, especially during the winter months, to get in contact with your Housing Officer on **01389 761 486 (option 2)**.

These are difficult times for everyone, but I have always found in these situations that our staff and tenants pull together to ensure where possible the tenants receive help and assistance.

Having difficulty reading this? Our newsletter can be made available on talking book or as a text only large print version. Please contact us if you would like to be added to our list for either of these, for this and all future newsletters.



Dunbritton Housing Association Ltd, 1 Hatters Lane, Dumbarton, G82 1AW
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Web: www.dunbritton.org.uk | Email: admin@dunbritton.org.uk

Opening Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 9am – 5pm
Wednesday: 9am – 12.30pm (closed in the afternoon for staff training)

