



Festive Message from Allan Murphy, Chief Executive



Once again, due to Covid 19 everyone has had to endure another difficult and challenging year. Hopefully, with the rollout programme of vaccinations and boosters this will help give us some reassurance as we go about our daily lives.

However, because of the damage to the economy many people have not escaped financial hardship and our Housing Officers have been working hard to signpost tenants to the appropriate agencies that can provide professional support and advice. Should you require support please contact your Housing Officer for more information.

Throughout the pandemic Dunbritton has strived to ensure that any disruptions to our service were kept to a minimum. We have introduced a mix of home and office working but have also re-

opened our office to the public. We have ensured that customers can continue to contact us directly, and we have worked hard to catch up with any outstanding repairs.

Despite these challenges, we have strived to continue to provide a good service and have managed to attain good key performance figures in relation to lets, arrears management and repairs.

Your safety is paramount to the Association and our Asset team has been focused on implementing a continuous programme of improvements including upgrading your smoke alarms to ensure that you remain safe.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a good Festive season from the Board and staff at Dunbritton and hope you can catch up and celebrate with your families this year.

Office Closure over Christmas & New Year

The office will close for the festive break at 12 noon on Friday 24 December, and shall re-open at 9 am on Thursday 6 January. If you require an emergency repair, please call Hanover Telecare on 0131 524 1418. Full details of emergency call out information are provided on page 6.

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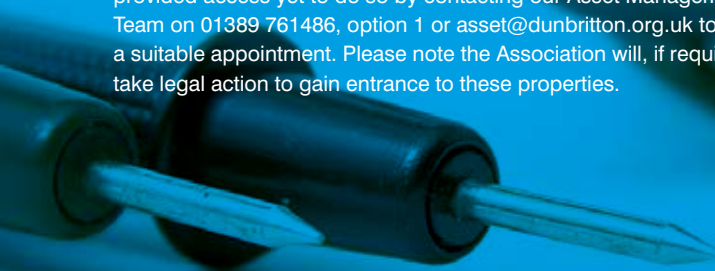
Electrical Safety

Fire detection, Electrical testing

As part of our cyclical maintenance programme and our continuous commitment to ensure our tenants' homes are safe, we have a responsibility to carry out periodic electrical testing every five years and provide up to date certification. These checks allow us to identify areas of improvement as well as providing certification that the electricians within our properties are safe.

In 2017 the Scottish Government made an amendment to the Housing Scotland Act, adding legislation that now requires all social landlords to provide enhanced fire safety equipment in all properties by February 2022. We have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic combining this upgrade with the requirement to ensure cyclical testing is done. These improvements can be done in just one visit. We are pleased to say we have just about reached full compliance. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our tenants for providing access through these unprecedented times allowing for this very important piece of work to take place.

There are still a small number of our tenants who have failed to provide access for this essential work. We cannot express enough the importance of carrying out this work and urge those who have not provided access yet to do so by contacting our Asset Management Team on 01389 761486, option 1 or asset@dunbritton.org.uk to arrange a suitable appointment. Please note the Association will, if required, take legal action to gain entrance to these properties.

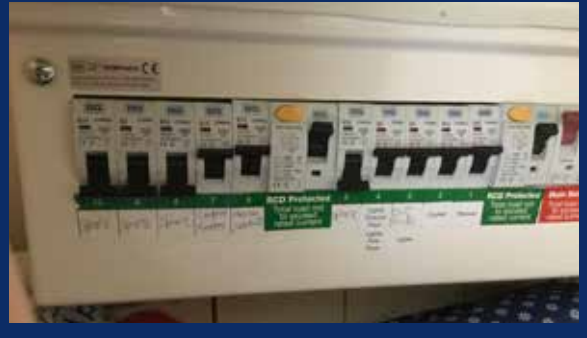


Electrical wire upgrades

A programme of works to upgrade the wiring in Churchill Estate commenced in April 2021. These works will be spread over two financial years, upgrading the wiring in Fisher, Malcolm and Nelson places. These works require access to all properties and can take up to two days to complete.

Our contractor, Ledgerwoods Electrical, will be in contact with all customers to arrange suitable dates for access.

If you have received notification from Ledgerwoods and not yet made an appointment for this work, we would urge you to please contact our Asset Management Team on 01389 761486, option 1 or asset@dunbritton.org.uk or to contact Ledgerwoods directly on 01389752944 by emailing info@ledgerwoods.co.uk



Congratulations to Kirsty on reaching ten years!

On the 5 December Kirsty celebrated reaching ten years with Dunbritton Housing Association having joined us from West Dunbartonshire Council in December 2011.

Kirsty initially came to the Association as a Housing Services Assistant, before being promoted to a Housing Officer. During her time with us she has completed the Chartered Institute of Housing level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice. She was instrumental in developing our allocations process and was a key member in the initial team that brought us onto an online common housing system (Abitras).

Kirsty played a leading role in many of our recent new build developments, working

on the Turnberry Place development in Dumbarton, Clydeview, Hermitage and Walker Place developments in Helensburgh, the Bruce Court development in Succoth, and most recently the Dumbarton Harbour project. These key developments having provided new homes to over two hundred and fifty households and reflect Dunbritton's commitment to continue to provide affordable housing and meet housing needs within our communities.

Kirsty currently works alongside Lindsey Reid in overseeing the Lochside and Dumbarton properties and is well known and liked amongst all of our tenants, contractors and staff.



The annual Board Away Day was held on Saturday the 27 November

The Away Day offers an ideal opportunity for the Board to explore key topics that will be impacting on the Association in the coming year.

During the day the Board and Management Team had the opportunity to hear from guest speakers, with Stephen Singer providing the Board with an

update on the works being carried out by Community Links, whilst Sharon Donohoe from the Tenant Information Service discussed tenant participation.

The Board also looked at the Assurance Statement and the Evidence Bank, these being key resources used by the Board to ensure that the Association is meeting

the requirements set out by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

With the limitations caused by the Covid outbreak, the Away Day also offered an opportunity for the new Board members to meet up and learn more about the running of the Association.



2021 Finance Conference



In November, Sephton MacQuire, Chair, Allan Murphy, Chief Executive Officer, and Heather Maitz, Finance Manager attended the Scottish Federation of Housing Association's annual Finance Conference. Finance remains a key area for the Association and is the essential building block in our plans for development and improvements in our homes.

The two day event provided an essential insight into the challenges being faced across the housing sector. Key areas discussed at the conference were sustainability, energy efficiency, rent affordability, the regulatory environment, and achieving net-zero.

Such events offer us the opportunity to link in with other housing providers and learn the best practices being employed. This in turn allows us to ensure that we are providing the best service to our customers and are always striving to achieve value for money.



Covid and Office Working

Since the initial challenges brought on by the Covid-19 outbreak, we have been learning how to live with and work through the impact of Covid. We have adapted how we work to ensure that we continue to deliver on key services and are prepared and able to adapt to any changes implemented by the Government. This has included developing our IT to provide for remote and home working, and reviewing our process to ensure customer and staff safety.

Our office remains open to the public, with safety measures in place including the use of protective screens, the wearing of face masks, temperature checks and sanitising gel. Our front line staff continue to carry out estate visits and will also visit tenants within their homes subject to safety requirements.

Make paying your rent a priority 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.

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 this includes:

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

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 2021.

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

For customers who pay rent by debit or credit card, over the telephone or in person

at the office, please note that our office will close at 12.30 pm on Friday 24 December 2021 and will not open again until Thursday 6 January 2022 at 9am.

If you are experiencing any problems in paying your rent, having problems with your benefits, or struggling with household bills, please contact us for help on

Telephone 01389 761486 and press Option 2 and ask to speak to your Housing Officer.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2021

We were delighted to again host our Annual General Meeting in September. Covid restrictions had again limited our format, and in line with our Rules, the Board decided that to ensure safety we would host the AGM via Zoom. Even though the meeting was held virtually, attendance remained high.

The AGM provides an opportunity for Members to find out what has been happening within the Association in the last year, with both the Chair and Chief Executive Officer, providing thorough reports to update members as to where we are at and how we are performing. The Annual Accounts were also presented by Steven Cunningham of Alexander Sloan Ltd. These detailed that the Association remains in a strong financial position.

At the AGM, nominations are made for the Board for the coming year, and immediately after the AGM, the new Board elect the Chair and Vice Chair. This year we were happy to welcome four new Board Members, Andrew Cameron, Chris Chalk, Derek Caldwell and Fiona Craig. Sephton MacQuire was re-elected to the position of Chair and Alistair Tuach to the position of Vice-Chair.

Each year the AGM also provides the opportunity for the Association's annual awards. This year's good neighbour competition winner was Margaret Butler of Helensburgh. Margaret has always kept an eye out and provided assistance to her neighbours, helping with keeping the communal grounds clear and tidy, and putting neighbours bins out for them when they forget.



Once again there was lots of contenders for the garden competition, this year's winners were:



Linsey McCartney of Roseneath (Argyll and Bute)



Aileen Deeley of Alexandria (West Dunbartonshire)

Well done to both Linsey and Aileen, and thank you for keeping our neighbourhoods beautiful.

This year we also introduced staff recognition awards to reflect the hard work and dedication shown by members of the Dunbritton team. The Customer Focus Award was won by Claire Samain of the Corporate Services Department and the Business Initiative Award was won by Anne Marie Somerville of the Asset Management Team.

We were delighted to welcome two new members to the Housing Services Team

Michelle Johnstone joins us with a wealth of experience having worked in Social Housing for over thirty years. She had recently worked as a Housing Officer at River Clyde Homes and is looking forward to bringing all of her experience to use in assisting DHA's tenants and customers.

Gemma Connell comes to us having worked with the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and prior to this, locally with Clydebank Housing Association. She is also studying for a degree in Business Management at the Open University.

Both Michelle and Gemma join the team as Housing Services Assistants and will be available to help customers with all housing related enquires from allocations to rent management.

We were sad to part ways with Leah MacKenzie, in October. Leah having been with us since April 2012, and a key member of our Asset Management team. Leah leaves us to take up a promoted post within the Council and we wish her every success in the future.



Michelle Johnstone



Gemma Connell

Direct Contact to 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 managing your rent account, discuss a move (transfer), ensuring your estate is maintained, and to assist with any neighbour disputes.

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



Laura Cuthbertson,
Housing Officer for Helensburgh
Direct dial - 01389 310890
Mobile number - 07717782791



Lindsey Reid,
Joint Housing Officer for the
Lochside and Dumbarton
Direct dial - 01389 310892
Mobile number - 07976708077



Sharon Kane,
Housing Officer for Alexandria
Direct dial - 01389 310891
Mobile number - 07717792894



Kirsty McGlashan,
Joint Housing Officer for the
Lochside and Dumbarton
Direct dial - 01389 310908
Mobile number - 07717762843



Emergency arrangements over the holiday period

Our office will be closed from 12 noon on Friday 24 December 2021 until 9 am on Thursday 6 January 2022.

During this period, if you need an emergency repair carried out, please call 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. (Please see list of repairs categorised as an emergency)

In the event Hanover is unavailable, individual contractors can be called directly: (Hanover must be first point of call)

1. Electrical emergencies: Ledgerwood Electrical
01389 752944 (07783 594543)
2. Gas Heating and Plumbing repairs: City Technical Services
0333 2020 708
3. John Duff Joinery 01389 767102
(07444218867)

EMERGENCY REPAIRS:

- Fire (tenants should immediately contact the emergency services on 999)
- Gas leak (tenants should contact the national gas emergency number immediately on 0800 111 999)
- Loss of heating where there is no other form of heating available
- Boiler fumes leak
- 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 in 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

Avoid the misery of frozen pipes

With winter getting into full swing, it is advisable to take some precautions to avoid suffering damage to your home from frozen pipes.

- Ensure you know where your mains water stop valve is located and make sure you can turn it off and on
- Report any dripping taps to the Association as soon as possible

If you are planning to go away during the winter period:

- Leave your heating on while you are away as this will help to stop pipes 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 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 they have been checked by our electrician.
- If you are in doubt, turn off your electricity at the mains

Drying out:

- Leave windows, doors and built-in cupboards open during the day if possible
- Keep the affected rooms heated but do not overheat them as this could cause further damage

Please note that the Association is not liable for damage to the contents of your home. You are responsible for arranging insurance for these items.



Contents Insurance

It is vital that you have insurance in place for your home as the Association does not provide insurance cover for your household furniture, floor coverings and effects. For further information please contact our office on 01389 761 486 (selecting option 2).

COLOURING COMPETITION

FOR
AGES
3-12
YEARS



For the chance to win £10, please enter your details and return by post to Dunbritton Housing Association, 1 Hatters Lane, Dumbarton, G82 1AW, or by e-mail at admin@dunbritton.org.uk

Name

Age

Address

Telephone



Rubbish & Recycling

There have been issues in our developments with regards to rubbish and recycling, including disposing of household items and loose bin bags being left outside the bins.

It is important to keep the bin areas clean and tidy and create a good environment in which people would want to live in, and we need tenants' assistance with this.

Loose rubbish or bin bags placed outside the bins reduces the cleanliness of the area and it also increases the risk of vermin including rats.

With Christmas coming up, we are aware that tenants are likely to have more rubbish including cardboard boxes and packaging and may be having a clear-out on the run-up to Christmas.

We have put together a list of handy hints that tenants can do 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 this belongs to. This will help reduce issues of people using the wrong bins.
- Ensure that all cardboard boxes are broken down and placed into 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 West Dunbartonshire area your nearest site is Dalmoak Civic Household Recycling Centre, Renton Road, Dumbarton, G82 4HQ. For Argyll & Bute area, the nearest is Blackhill Recycling Centre, Luss Road, Helensburgh.

- Any bulk 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.

Key Topics for 2022

Social Housing is always changing, and at Dunbritton we always look to keep ahead of the game. We have been working on some key projects which we shall be developing into 2022.

These are:

Net Zero

This year has seen the West of Scotland under the world's gaze as interest focused on Glasgow for COP 26. This has highlighted that we can all go further in reducing our carbon footprint. At Dunbritton we will be reviewing and developing a strategy to take the Association forward.

Service Charge Review

As most tenants will recall the Association undertook a full service charge review in 2016. It is important that we ensure that the charges accurately and fairly reflect the service costs. Therefore, in the new year the current service charge levels will be reviewed.

Developing a Value for Money Statement

The Association strives to achieve value for money and we continue to ensure that all key services are procured to achieve the best deals for our tenants.

We are currently considering this area of our work and will be producing a statement to reflect our understanding of 'value for money'. This will enable us to better assess and audit our future work to ensure that we are achieving this definition.

Tenant Participation

Our interactions with our scrutiny panel have been limited during the Covid outbreak. As we begin to see restrictions lifted we shall be revisiting tenant participation. We have instructed the Tenant Information Service (TIS) to help us plan and develop participation in the coming year. Enclosed with this newsletter is an introductory leaflet explaining what is 'tenant participation' and how you could get involved.

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
Serving the Communities of Helensburgh & Lomond, Dumbarton and Vale of Leven since 1992
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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)

