



**West
Granton**

Housing Co-op
sustaining and championing
the co-operative way

SPRING 2020

newsletter



Rent increase weekly rents 2020-21

In February 2020 all tenants were notified in writing of the changes to their rent which takes effect from **Monday, 6th April 2020**.

All rent payments are due on a weekly basis or by payment in advance.

You can choose to pay your rent by monthly direct debit, cash or debit card in the office, over the phone by debit card or bank standing order.

If you pay by Bank Standing Order please remember to advise your bank to change your rent payment for the week beginning **6th April**.

If you wish to discuss changes or payment options please contact the Housing Management Team on **0131 551 5035**.

If you claim Universal Credit you should inform the DWP of the new rent from **Monday 6 April**. A 'To Do' message will be sent by the DWP after 6 April dependent on your assessment date.

Emergency Repairs

Whilst the office is closed please telephone your emergency repairs through to **Hanover Telecare** on **0800 917 8039**.

Please remember to only report EMERGENCY repairs over the holiday period.



Gas Emergencies Lothian Gas on 0131 440 4666

The WGHC Office will be closed for Public Holidays on:
Friday 10 April 2020 • Monday 13 April 2020 • Friday 8 May 2020

Feedback

As a tenant led housing co-operative, your feedback and input are incredibly important to us. To discuss any of the items below, please contact Alan McKee at the office who would be delighted to chat.



Tenants panel

We would love to hear your views on the way we run our services. We plan to form a sounding board of tenants who would like to be asked their views on matters that are important to them. Subjects could include repairs, the way we look after our estates or anti-social behaviour issues. If you would like to be approached for your views when we are reviewing our procedures, please let us know. We can consult you in any way that suits your preference (meetings, phone call, questionnaire, home visit etc).

AGM

Our Annual General Meeting takes place on **Wednesday 2 September** in the Prentice Centre. It is important that as many of our members as possible attend the meeting. If you have any thoughts on what would make tenants more likely to attend, let us know.

Website

Our website continues to develop and increase the amount of information available, such as the minutes of Committee meetings so you can see which important issues are discussed and decided upon. Why not have a look at www.westgrantonhousing.coop and let us know what you think.

Annual Performance Report

Every Autumn, we send out our landlord report explaining how we have performed against various targets (mainly set by the Scottish Housing Regulator) as well as comparisons with other landlords. We would be very keen to hear your views on the content, layout/design or format of this report.



Smoke Alarms – access

The Scottish government has introduced new legislation in relation to the requirement for fire protection in housing, this came about after the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London. We are currently carrying out a programme to upgrade smoke alarms in our properties. It is vitally important that you allow access for this essential work to be carried out and your co-operation is appreciated.



Grass cutting

Our Grass Cutting Service is provided as an ongoing discretionary scheme for applicants who are over 75 or who provide evidence that they are unable to maintain their garden.

The contractors will only mow the lawn, strim where required and remove cuttings.

Our Contractors will not cut any lawn where dog foul is found lying in the garden. If you think you could qualify and wish to apply, please contact the office.



Staffing

We are delighted to announce that our long serving Assistant Housing Officer, **Louise Anger**, was promoted to Housing Officer In January 2020 – congratulations Louise!



We also welcome two new permanent members of staff:

Sheena Farrell is our new Housing Administrative Assistant and will be your first point of contact and welcome at the office.



From 30th March 2020, WGHC will be appointing another Housing Officer, **Lorraine Gahagan** to work alongside Louise and Sheena.



We would like to take this opportunity to officially welcome Sheena and Lorraine to the team and we look forward to working with them both.

Coronavirus

The Coronavirus has not yet affected any of our employees or the services we provide.

We continue to monitor the daily updates on COVID-19 from the Government and the NHS as well as the advice from Public Health Scotland.

If you are self-isolating or have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with the coronavirus please be responsible and let us know immediately by contacting our office on **0131 551 5035** or email us at **mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk** Our staff and contractors will not be expected to



visit or carry out any office based meetings with any person who falls in to one of these categories.

We are looking to maintain our current level of service, however, guidance from the Government is subject to change on a daily basis at the moment, so some disruption in the future to our services is considered likely. WGHC will keep tenants updated.



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e mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk

w www.westgrantonhousing.coop

Out-of-office emergencies: 0800 917 8039

Committee Matters

The Committee of Management of WGHC is its board of directors.

Unlike most social landlords, all WGHC's committee members are tenants.

As well as this quarterly report in the Newsletter you can also find a copy of the Minutes of every Committee Meeting from April 2019 on our web site

www.westgrantonhousing.coop.

There was no Committee meeting in January so the February meeting was a busy one.

Committee discussed 30 year projected spending plan for Planned Maintenance and Component Replacement for the period 2020-2050. It was highlighted that the two largest areas of spend through the 30 year plan are the replacement of central heating systems and the replacement of bathrooms including ground floor toilets.

Committee also noted the importance of cash flow to the success of the organisation and the need for WGHC to have sufficient cash at all times to enable it to pay its expenses, debts/loans, buy new assets, etc, i.e. remain solvent. Looking at this and the Statement of Financial Position, it is projected that we may need a loan of £1m in 2026 to ensure a healthy cash flow is maintained. However, Committee will review WGHC's financial position annually and this is therefore subject to change. In addition, by 2026, WGHC's other loans will have reduced so any requirement for an additional loan would only have a marginal effect on WGHC's debt values as a result. After this discussion, Committee approved the Statement of Financial Position,

30 year Cash Flow and Planned Maintenance and Component Replacement Plan and the Budget for 2020-21.

Committee also approved the following at the February Meeting:

- To retain MenCO to carry out the landscaping and grass cutting service for 2020/21;
- A proposal to replace the wooden climbing frame in Granton Mill Crescent. The current frame has been in situ for nearly 20 years now;
- WGHC's New Tenant Participation Strategy;
- WGHC's New Appropriate Language Policy;
- WGHC's Health & Safety Policy.

Committee noted the following at the February Meeting:

- WGHC's CEO will take over as Chair of ARCHIE (**Alliance of Registered Co-operatives and Housing Associations in Edinburgh**) in 2020-21;
- Our internal auditors Wylie & Bisset were on site January and February to examine how we comply with our financial and corporate governance requirements under the Scottish Housing Regulatory Framework, Arrears Management and Allocations. Results will be reported to the Audit Sub Committee and feedback to the main Committee of Management in due course.