



**West
Granton**

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

SPRING 2021

newsletter



Rent increase weekly rents 2021-22

In February 2021 all tenants were notified in writing of the changes to their rent which takes effect from Monday, 5th April 2021. WGHC continues to offer one of the lowest rents for a social landlord in the Edinburgh area.

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 claim Universal Credit you should inform

the DWP of the new rent from **Monday 5th April**. You should receive a "To Do" prompt in your journal to remind you. As always, if you wish to discuss changes or payment options please contact the Housing Management Team on **0131 551 5035**.

Emergency Repairs

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



Emergency Heating Repairs Kingdom Gas on **01334 650452**

Remember only report **EMERGENCY** repairs during lockdown.

Neighbourhood News



Towards the end of last year an incident of vandalism resulted in major damage to one of our lifts at Colonsay Close. The repair works are major and will cost WGHC in the region of £25,000. Allegedly, a person was stuck within the lift car and a tool or implements were used to pry open apart the lift doors causing significant damage. The lift is fitted with an emergency call phone which was not used but also left damaged. Investigations to date have proved unsuccessful going to print. If you have any information regarding this incident, please call us on **0131 551 5035** or email us: mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk.

We have seen an increase in fly-tipping and the dumping of rubbish bags in the landscaped garden

area at the top of Granton Mains Avenue. We are currently joint working with City of Edinburgh Council to identify and make contact with the persons responsible. Meanwhile, in the interest of hygiene and keeping the area clean, we will continue to carry out regular inspections of this area and uplift the dumped rubbish as and when required.

During lockdown there has been also been an increase in the amount of dog foul across the estate. If you witness a person allowing their dog to foul in a public area and not picking it up please report this to the Council using their online form found at Edinburgh.gov.uk/dogfouling Remember this is an offence under the Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003.

Meet our new Governance & Compliance Manager/DPO

We are pleased to announce the appointment of **David Mills** as our new Governance & Compliance Manager/Data Protection Officer (DPO).

WGHC's CEO, Larke Adger, explains "We looked at the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework and asked what was the best way for WGHC to ensure we are doing everything we need to be doing? We then asked how this could be achieved? It became apparent that we needed a full time senior management role unique to our organisation which combined the areas of both governance and compliance."

Previously, David was the out-sourced DPO for 28 different organisations, of which 19 are Scottish RSLs, and he has said the following: "I'm really thrilled to have joined the WGHC team fulfilling the role of the Governance & Compliance Manager, also encompassing the duties of DPO – so I ensure I keep abreast of the rapidly changing developments in the data protection sphere".



Do you need access to a Welfare Rights Advisor or a Debt Advisor?

WGHC have **both**. We recognise this is a challenging time for everyone just now. If you are a WGHC tenant and need advice about benefits or need to speak to someone about getting help with your debts **DON'T SIT AND WORRY, DON'T SIT AND IGNORE IT – TAKE ACTION NOW.**

Contact a member of our Housing Management Team on **0131 551 5035** to make an appointment. These services are here to help you. Both are **FREE**, confidential and exclusively for WGHC tenants.



Free Books from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting charity for young children aged 0-5. Dolly wants to guarantee access to books, inspire a lifelong love of reading and help children reach their full potential. The imagination library sends a carefully selected, age appropriate, book in the post every month. West Granton Housing Co-operative working in partnership with the Imagination library means there is no cost to you, as our tenant. So please download the form from our website or collect one from the office to register any of your children who are aged under 5 years.



Simply complete and return the form to us and we will set you up to receive free books.

NEW Complaints Handling Procedure

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) has updated its complaint handling procedures for Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) with the new changes coming into effect from April 2021. The new procedures encourage landlords to improve their record keeping and responses to complaints and focus more on achieving a satisfactory resolution, where possible and practicable.

Our revised procedures were given final approval by our Committee of Management on 17th March 2021. Accordingly, WGHC have now formally adopted the new procedures, a copy of which

can be found on our website. Alternatively, you can request a copy to be sent out to you by phoning our office on **0131 551 5035**.



Joint ARCHIE Bid Successful to the Communities Recovery Fund

WGHC, along with some of its ARCHIE partners, have been successful in securing a bid for funding from the Government's Communities Recovery Fund. WGHC have been awarded grants to purchase 25 Chrome Books, 20 "myfy" devices and 50 Energy Saving Packs all of which will be for the exclusive use by WGHC tenants. Further details of how the devices and packs will be distributed/used will

be published on our website in due course. Meanwhile if you would like to register your interest for any of these items please email us at mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk or phone our office on **0131 551 5035**.



The Alliance of Registered
Co-operatives & Housing Associations,
Independent in Edinburgh



**West
Granton**

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

West Granton Housing Co-op | 26 Granton Mill Crescent | Edinburgh EH4 4UT

t 0131 551 5035

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.
As a fully mutual co-operative, all WGHC 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 plans for Planned Maintenance and Component Replacement for the period 2021-2051. 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. However, there is an area of uncertainty about replacing entire central heating systems in our properties as the Scottish Government is currently discussing what alternative systems social landlords might use in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as part of their commitment to tackling climate change.

All Scottish social landlords are in the same position right now and it is very difficult to forecast what you might spend on changing the entire central heating systems across your stock when the Government have yet to announce what the

system will be, what infrastructure will be put in place in Edinburgh to allow any new system to operate and also, what if any, grant funding will be made available to help us do this.

Following on from this, Committee also discussed 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. A summary report on Cash Flow is presented to Committee at every meeting. Cash flow remains healthy and financially we are in a strong position.

Committee also approved the following at the February Meeting:

- To retain MenCO to carry out the landscaping and grass cutting service for 2021/22;
- To retain Quay Community to continue to the cleaning of our common stairs and communal bin stores

The last Committee before the year end was held on 17th March 2021. The first meeting in the new financial year will be held on 21st April 2021.

COVID-19 Support Links

We understand the impacts that coronavirus (COVID-19) can have on our lives. To help we have provided some links to websites we hope you might find useful.

Mind are a mental health charity that have a dedicated webpage for COVID-19.
www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/

Money Saving Expert www.moneysavingexpert.com

Government Covid-19 Spring Update

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021>