



It's that time of year again...

It's hard to believe almost another year has passed. The WGHC office will be closed over the festive period from **Friday 22nd December 2023** right through until, re-opening, on **Wednesday 03rd January 2024**.

The current cost of living is a challenge for all of us, but please **remember** it's really important to **organise the payment of your rent in readiness for this period**. If you need to speak to us about paying your rent or if you think you are going to struggle to meet your rent payments please contact hm@westgrantonhc.co.uk We are here to help.

Our out of hours emergency call centre will be able to contact key staff in the event of a serious incident. Please refer to the WGHC website that will have all the relevant emergency call-out information for you.

The main number to call is:
0131 608 1447 – Aquarius Call Centre

If you have a gas emergency:
0131 440 4666 – Lothian Gas

If you have a water emergency:
0800 077 8778 – Scottish Water



It's been a challenging year for many tenants, especially, with the cost of living crisis. We recognise that household running costs (gas/electricity) have forced many to make some difficult choices.

We have helped many tenants using the grant funding we received from Scottish Government and we still have approx. **£55k available for the benefit of WGHC tenant members**. Further information can be found on our website. Alternatively, please don't hesitate to speak to us on **0131 551 5035** or e-mail mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk If you need help, please get in touch.

Finally, please remember your neighbours, who are also WGHC tenant members just like you, during the festive break. Loneliness can be one of the most heart-breaking issues during this time of year. We want to know that all our tenant members are warm and safe and we look forward to seeing everyone, safe and well, back in the New Year. During 2024 we have many new plans and initiatives to help and benefit all WGHC tenant members. It's going to be exciting!

WGHC Tenants have their say...

You may remember that in the last (Autumn) newsletter, it was announced that WGHC had engaged the Tenant Information Service (TIS), to write out to all tenants seeking volunteers to come to a Tenant Forum and provide their views and insights as to how WGHC staff service levels are perceived and what might be done to make improvements.

TIS held their Tenant Forum in our Boardroom on Friday 24th November 2023. Tenants from various areas within our estate voluntarily attended and gave their views on a range of topics all linked to customer service levels experienced and what they would like to see happen in the future.

TIS have provided a comprehensive report. We have accepted all the findings and have also, **more importantly**, accepted all their recommendations.

The full report is being presented to the WGHC Committee of Management at their December meeting and thereafter will be shared with all tenants via our website. These comments (and similar others) will help shape the plans of the Committee and both the CEO (Larke Adger) and COO (David Mills) will be charged with their implementation in 2024, including the introduction of a Customer Service Charter. Meanwhile, some take away 'snapshot' comments from the tenant members who participated are quoted below:

“The customer service provided by West Granton staff is generally very good.”

“There's a sense of strong community engagement and most of us have a good rapport with the staff.”

“Staff could be more transparent with timescales when responding to tenants enquiries.”

“Responses to planned works enquiries are slow and not forthcoming. A commitment through a customer service charter would improve this.”

“Tenants should be entitled to expect a response, even if it's a holding response, within set timescales. That would support West Granton to manage tenants expectations.”

“The introduction of a customer service charter would ensure that staff are proactive rather than reactive to responding to tenants enquiries.”

“A customer service charter would ensure that tenants are kept up to date throughout and that West Granton are being transparent.”

“I've really enjoyed being able to meet other tenants and share our experiences of West Granton's housing services.”

We would like to thank TIS for managing the event and the tenant members* who participated.

(*Attendees received a £20 voucher and refreshments for giving their time)



New Year... New Job??

A New Year can bring new beginnings

- Will you be looking for a new job?
- Do you want to volunteer, perhaps?
- Do you need help?
- Do you have, or are you able, to write a CV?
- Do you know where to start?

Getting started with any of these can be tricky, but help is at hand!

WGHC is a member of ARCHIE (an alliance with 6 other Housing Associations in Edinburgh). One of the alliance members, Harbour Homes, (formerly Port of Leith Housing Association) is offering this specialist service (see right).



To get in touch:

Call: **0131 554 0403** Text: **07791 158585** Email: jane.whiting@harbour.scot

We all need a little help sometimes...

Sometimes, despite our best plans, we struggle. We can struggle with 'life'. We can struggle with our mental health. We can struggle with our families. We can struggle with utility bills. We can struggle with our money or debt. There is no shame associated with struggling; life can be hard and all of us have been there at some point.

WGHC have joined up with ARCHIE alliance members to work together so that targeted, specific, help can be provided to our tenant members. All services are free and confidential.

- You can access specialist Energy Advisors, Kenny and Katie, who have some incredible success stories already with WGHC tenants. There is no need to struggle with utility companies- they will do this for you.
- You can access Debt Advisors who specialise in debt advice that is not intrusive or judgemental. There is no need to struggle with debt, help is available.

- We can also make tenant referrals to Granton Information Centre for specialist Welfare Rights and Benefits advice. There is no need to struggle with Benefits- new or existing claims.

You only need to ask **1 question**, or send **1 email**, or make **1 phone call**...

mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk or **0131 551 5035**.

Please don't struggle, help us help you.



WGHC submit application regarding overgrown Leylandii Trees

The CEO of WGHC (authorised by Committee) applied under the High Hedges (Scotland) Act 2013 due to the unacceptable and, potentially, dangerous height of the leylandii trees that border our estate. These trees affect the light to many WGHC tenant’s gardens, causing damp, dank, dark conditions. Equally, they drop many needles that block gutters and drains.

The trees are owned, jointly, by the owner occupiers in West Pilton Drive and West Pilton Green. Ordinarily, it would be their responsibility to maintain the trees. However, in the absence of a response, WGHC have taken action with the City of Edinburgh Council, using the legislation available, to try and progress the situation to a satisfactory and safe conclusion for all. CEC have written to the CEO to advise they will progress the application, as described in the letter above, in early 2024.



Your newly elected Committee members are:

Colin Fraser (Chair)	Wendy Riordan (Vice Chair)	Jim Hemphill (Vice Chair)
George Thomson	Liz Robertson	Amanda Aitchison
Morag Orr	Lynn Jameson	Cameron Durance
Alan Lamont	Elizabeth Stewart	Mary Fergus
		James Matthews (Co-optee)

Our Committee are now more representative of WGHC as we have more members than we have ever had in our 34-year history and from different areas within our estate.

Minutes of all Committee Meetings are on our website.

IN MEMORIAM: WGHC were sad to learn of the passing of George Nicol in November. Despite battling a long-term illness, George, selflessly, gave up countless hours of his own time over the years to serve on the Committee. Our thoughts are very much with his family.