

GPHC



Garrion People's Housing Co-operative Ltd

Welcome to your Autumn Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2022

Fun Days 2022



See page 6 for more!

Find us on Facebook!

Find us on
facebook

We now have a Facebook page for Garrion People's Housing Co-operative, as well as the page we have always had for CentrePoint. This will be a great way to keep up to date on all of our news and updates on a regular basis. You'll also be able to message us any time, and we'll reply during our normal working hours. To find us, scan the QR code on the right using your phone camera, and click the link which pops up or search 'Garrion People's Housing Co-operative'. We look forward to seeing you.



We would like to hear your suggestions about what you'd like us to post or share online. It could involve information on how we are performing, activities or volunteering opportunities, our rent review consultation process, or anything else you would like to hear about. Let us know your thoughts.



Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Have Your Say... Your Opinion Matters!

It is really important to the Co-operative that we monitor the services we provide to you.

We do this by appointing an independent company to carry out a satisfaction survey with our tenants every 3 years.

The time has come around again and we have appointed The Knowledge Partnership to carry out this survey during the winter months.

Further details will be provided nearer the time, but please take part as we want to hear your views on our service.

The Knowledge Partnership will arrange a suitable appointment with you.

This survey will allow us to identify the areas where we are getting it right, also to ascertain where there is dissatisfaction and where we need to improve.

The data collected will also help us get a better understanding of our tenants' needs and identify what is important to you.

We will use this information to feed into our service improvements and action plan.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete the survey and helping the Co-operative improve the service we provide to you.

Do you need a referral for a food bank? Help is at hand...



Have you experienced a problem with your benefits, had an unexpected expense or a change to your household circumstances and it has left you with no money?

If so, contact the office on **01698 687222** or email **laura@gphc.org.uk** to arrange for a referral to be sent through to our community foodbank.

Foodbank support is available locally on a Tuesday and Friday serving those in need across the community of North Lanarkshire.

FINANCIAL WORRIES?

Please don't panic, we are here to help!

We recognise that many of our tenants may be struggling with lost income and rising costs for fuel and food.

We urge you to get in touch as soon as possible by calling us on **01698 687222**. We can arrange an appointment with Robert our Income/Money Advisor.

Our AFTAR Project is available for anyone who requires support to claim benefits or get assistance with finances and budgeting.



RENT AFFORDABILITY

The Co-operative is committed to keeping our rents affordable and work hard to ensure that rent increases are kept to a minimum.

Unfortunately, the current cost of living crisis is not only affecting you but also the Co-operative.

It is therefore an ongoing challenge to ensure that rent increases are kept to a minimum whilst ensuring we can still repair and maintain your homes and invest in our stock.

We are concerned due to the extreme economic circumstances, with spiralling inflation impacting on construction, maintenance and staffing means the Co-operative along with other registered

social landlords will have to strike a balance in the decisions this year and in the future.

The Co-operative understands the importance of supporting tenants through these tough times, while ensuring the Co-operative can remain viable.

We will work in conjunction with the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) to carry out a review of the affordability of our rents using the SFHA Affordability tool kit.

Consultation will also take place with our Rent Focus Group to help inform discussions around our annual rent review for 2023/24.

Paying Your Rent



The Co-operative appreciates due to the increase with the cost of living, money is tight just now and it can be difficult to make ends meet.

We understand in today's current climate this can be difficult and we are also here to support and assist you, however paying your rent should be your top priority.

Paying your rent not only protects your tenancy but also ensures that we can deliver important services such as:-

- Essential repairs and maintenance to your home;

- Improvement programmes such as new kitchen, windows and bathrooms;
- Delivering services such as that via our AFTAR project.

For ways to pay go to **<https://www.gphc.org.uk/rent/10.pay-your-rent>**.

If you have fallen behind with your rent payments and accrued rent arrears, it is vital that you act quickly and contact your Housing Officer, Joanne McNally.

For information, help and support please contact Joanna by email **joanna@gphc.org.uk** or phone on **077339 19333**.

Government Cost of Li

As part of the Government plans to assist people with the rising energy costs they have devised a plan to award various payments to help towards the high energy bills that everyone is facing.



- **Who will get the £400 discount?**

Every household will be eligible for the £400 discount.

- **How will I get the discount?**

You don't need to apply for the discount. It will be paid out by electricity suppliers to consumers over six months, with the first payments starting in October 2022.

In October and November, households will get a discount of £66 per month on their energy bills, rising to £67 each month from December through to March 2023.

Every household will get the discount each month, regardless of how you pay for your energy (i.e. by direct debit or pre-payment meter).

- **Do I need to contact my energy supplier for the discount?**

No, you don't need to contact your supplier, however, if you haven't received the first instalment by the end of October 2022, you should get in touch with your energy supplier.

You will never be asked for your bank details.

- **How will the £400 discount be paid?**

You can find more details about how the discount will be paid to you, depending on how you currently pay for your energy: <https://www.mygov.scot/help-energy-bills>

- **Direct debit**

If you pay for your energy via direct debit, you'll automatically receive a reduction to the amount that's collected by your monthly direct debit, or as a refund to your bank account after the direct debit has gone out.

This will happen once a month over the six-month payment period.

- **Standard credit and payment card**

If you pay using standard credit or a payment card, the discount will be applied automatically as a credit to your account in the first week of each month. The credit will appear in your account as it would if you had made the payment.

- **Smart prepayment meter**

If you pay via a smart prepayment meter, you'll see the discount credited directly to your smart prepayment meter in the first week of each month.

- **Traditional prepayment meter**

Those paying by traditional prepayment meters will receive redeemable vouchers or Special Action Messages (SAMs) in the first week of each month. These will be sent out to you via SMS text message, email or post. You'll then be able to redeem these vouchers at your usual top-up point. It's therefore important your supplier has your current, up-to-date contact details.

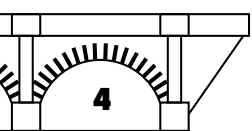
- **Is it a loan that I have to pay back?**

The £400 is a grant, not a loan, so will not need to be repaid.

- **Cost of Living Payment**

Households on means tested benefits, including Universal Credit, Pension Credit and Tax Credits, will receive a payment of £650 this year.

This will be made automatically in two instalments, one in summer and another in the autumn, and is in addition to the £400 discount on energy bills.



ving Energy Assistance

- **Disability Cost of Living Payment**

From 20th September, 6 million people who are paid certain disability benefits will receive an automatic one-off £150 payment. The payment will help disabled people with the rising Cost of Living acknowledging the higher disability-related costs they often face, such as care and mobility needs.

This is in addition to the £650 Cost of Living Payment for disabled people who also receive means tested benefits.

- **Pensioner Cost of Living Payment**

In the winter months pensioners can get between £100 and £300 to help pay heating bills.

This winter, they will also receive an extra one-off £300 Pensioner Cost of Living

Payment, which will be paid as an automatic top-up to the Winter Fuel Payment.

- **Cold weather payments**

£25 extra a week if you're getting certain benefits and is available during the winter when the temperature is zero or below for more than seven days.

- **Warm Home Discount**

This autumn nearly three million low-income households are eligible for a £150 rebate on their winter electricity bills.

Check with your energy supplier to see if you are eligible.

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/finding-your-energy-supplier-or-network-operator>

You can get free energy advice and support...

You can obtain free impartial advice on energy bills and usage and help with billing issues via Citizens Advice Bureau's Energy Advice Service.

Should you require any assistance with this please contact the office on **01698 687222** and we can pass your details onto an Advisor who will assist you.

Through the AFTAR partnership, we have secured access to a number of energy efficiency measures (including energy efficient bulbs and radiator reflectors). Please contact us if you would like any of these - they will be issued on a first come, first served basis.



A hand holds a white energy meter. A thought bubble above it says "Struggling with your energy costs?". The poster includes the Citizens Advice Bureau logo, the address "90 Brandon Parade East Motherwell ML1 1LY", and the text "CAB provides a free, confidential and impartial service to help advise you about your energy costs". It also says "Contact Motherwell and Wishaw Bureau's energy adviser using this number: 07741661976".

Come along to our FREE computer learning sessions

You can get help with any computer or device learning, assistance with CV's and Job Centre commitments!

Forgewood Community Centre:
Wednesdays 9 - 11am
South Wishaw Parish Church IT Suite:
Thursdays 1 - 4pm



FREE Computer Learning Sessions



COMMUNITIES TEAM UPDATE

A busy summer at CentrePoint

After being impacted for two years by the pandemic it was nice to have a busy summer of events and activities back within the community.

Community Garden Parties were held on 28 June and 20 July with arts & crafts, activities, magician and games. An amazing buffet was provided filled with a mixture of traditional Scottish and Eastern European food and cakes. People created colourful hearts which we will use to create a wonderful piece of artwork entitled 'The Heart of Gowkthrapple'.

To celebrate the Jubilee we held a community BBQ with food, face painting, arts and crafts and Owl Magic.

At Law View we held a lovely lunch to celebrate the Jubilee along with a series of garden parties to complement a summer of fun and food.



A big thank you to all those who helped out with the Community Litter Pick in July..... what a difference made in a day while enjoying the sunny weather.

Big Chef, Little Chef course took place this summer in partnership with Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership making tasty treats from chicken noodle soup to cheesecake....which was delicious.



Following a busy summer there is no rest for the wicked as the community have a busy autumn planned, hope to see you at one of our activities.

We are planning on creating a volunteer group for CentrePoint. If you are interested in helping out, learning new skills or meeting new people then please contact the Community Team. For more information contact Richard, Karin Nicky or Laura on **01698 687222** or email **community@gphc.org.uk**.



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An amazing Autumn of events and activities

Community Garden Party

**Saturday 1st October
11am - 1pm**

Come spend time with our visitors – the reptiles from Reptizoo, the owls from Owl Magic and the magician Leigh Milne. Food, games and crafts too!



Gardening

Every Tuesday 1pm - 2.30pm

Help look after the garden.

Men's Model Making Group

**27th September, 11th & 25th
October, 8th & 22nd November**

Note: Now on Tuesdays 2pm - 3.30pm

NEW

Harvest Festival

Tuesday 18th October at 1.30pm - 3pm

Fun and games to help us celebrate our harvest.



Social History Group

**Tuesday 4th October &
1st November 1.30pm - 3pm**

Share stories of Gowkthrapple and learn of it's history.

Soup in the Loop

**Thursday 3rd November
12pm - 1.30pm**



Cost of living crisis

As we are very aware of the impact of the rising in the cost of living we are hosting a drop in event on Tuesday 4th October, 2022 from 5.30pm to 7.30pm at CenterPoint.

There will be a few people at hand to provide support and give some helpful tip.

Like previous years we will continue to look for any funding or project that can help lessen the impact on our community.

If you are struggling this year please contact us so we can direct you to the latest support and projects that may be able to help.

Community Team Contacts

For more information please contact the Community Team:

Richard Bolton
Community Development Officer
richard@gphc.org.uk
07495 549 065 / 01698 687222

Thanks to our funders & supporters.



Estate Walkabouts

We have carried out an Estate Management walkabout in May and September.

Should you wish to join the next walkabout in spring next year please contact your Housing Officer, Joanna McNally.

These walkabouts enable residents to come along and join staff in a walk around our estates. Any areas of concern can be identified along with ways they could be improved.

Road Safety

It has been reported that cars have been found driving at unacceptable speeds within some of our estates.

The speed has been found to be inappropriate for residential areas.

The majority of drivers and other road users are careful, considerate and use common sense.



However, there are some road users who insist on using residential roads in ways that could be dangerous, intimidating and antisocial to everyone else. This small number of people represent a threat to themselves and others around them.

It is hoped with raising awareness to residents that any drivers when in residential estates consider their speed and help keep everyone safe.

Police Surgery

The housing staff recently held a drop in surgery at Centrepont with the Community Police and unfortunately the turnout was very low.

This is an opportunity for you to speak with the Community Police and housing staff should you be experiencing anti-social behaviour.

The Community Police are committed to working jointly with the Co-operative to tackle any issues of this nature within our communities.

A further surgery will be arranged in the near future and we would ask you to look out for either posters or a text message confirming the date and time.

Contents Insurance

Contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions. We strongly recommend that you take out home contents insurance.

No matter how careful you are, there is always a risk that your belongings could be broken, damaged or stolen and home contents insurance can help provide peace of mind.

The Co-operative is not responsible for covering damage to any of your possessions in the event of a fire or flood, this includes decoration and floor coverings.

We suggest that all tenants take out home contents insurance, either through Thistle Tenant Risk Home Contents Insurance Scheme or by making your own arrangements.

To find out more information on the options and costs of Thistle Tenant Risk:-

- Call **0345 450 7286**
- Request an application pack from the Co-operative;
- Visit **www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk** where you can also request someone to call you back!



Glorious Gardens

This year's garden competition is all about recognising our gardeners and the effort they make to make our communities look lovely. We have taken photos of the gardens tended by our green fingered experts.

Judging took place independently by our landscape contractor (Murray Landscapes) and here are our winning gardens in full bloom.....

JOINT WINNERS
37 & 39
Woodgreen Court



WINNER
144 Heathfield



WINNER
23 Hopefield
Gardens



WINNER
26 Law View



Stock Condition Surveys

An important part of the Co-operative's planning and investment programme revolves around the information we gather during our stock condition surveys.

We have appointed JMP Construction & Property Consultants to carry out condition surveys to approximately 40% of our properties.

These surveys are anticipated to take place around November/December and we will contact you in the near future to provide further information on this.

The survey should take up to 30 minutes for a flat and up to 60 minutes for a house. Ideally, we will need access to all rooms in your home, and some photos may be taken

during the survey but not of your personal possessions.

This survey does not collect information on any outstanding repairs to your home. If you need to report a repair, please do this in the normal way.

If you would like to volunteer your home to be included in our surveys, please contact our office on **01698 687222**.



Bin Sheds – Heathfield & Smith Avenue



The maintenance team have changed all locks and padlocks in the bin sheds and provided tenants with keys. However, we are disappointed to note that despite this numerous padlocks have been damaged.

We would ask all tenants to stay vigilant and should you witness any padlocks being damaged please report this to the Co-operative.

We have also received numerous complaints and concerns regarding residents

not locking the bin sheds which has led to fly tipping and non-Garrion residents using our bin sheds. This has resulted in excess bin bags which cannot fit in the padlocks being left on the ground which could attract vermin.

We would ask residents to work alongside the Co-operative by ensuring the doors and padlocks are locked at all times to prevent these issues and would actively encourage you to report fly tipping to North Lanarkshire Council.

CLOSE CLEANING CONTRACT

After a successful trial period, we have now awarded our close cleaning contract to **DMD Industrial Cleaning Ltd.** The contract will run until **31st March 2023** and the common closes will be cleaned every **two weeks**.

Should you have any feedback or comments to make regarding the service please contact our office.



Landscaping Contract

Murray Landscapes have continued to make improvements to our common areas since the new contract commenced in June 2022. We have received good positive feedback from tenants and staff regarding the standard of work.

After the last grass cut in October all shrub beds throughout the estates will be cut hard back in relation to the correct horticultural practices and stock varieties. The hard landscaping i.e. paths, kerb lines, backcourts, all hard paving will be cleared of vegetation and sprayed with chemicals ready for the start of the 2023 season.

After all the major works are brought up to date the remaining months of the winter will be used to keep check at the sites and carry

out any works to prepare an early start for the beginning of the new season.

We are however experiencing continual problems with dog fouling in some of our blocks, which is delaying our programme of works. Should you witness any issues with dog fouling or have a comment about the service, please contact our office in confidence.

We would like to congratulate our contractor Murray Landscapes who recently won the Best Business, 0-10 employees, at the Lanarkshire Business Excellence Award 2022....Well done!



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Manage condensation in your home

A build-up of moisture in the home can cause a range of problems and can potentially damage the fabric of the building if allowed to continue.

Condensation happens when moist air touches a cool surface. It forms water droplets and moisture on the surface.

If this continues over a period of time and does not dry out, it encourages mould growth.

It can also happen when large pieces of furniture, for example wardrobes and beds, are placed against an outside wall.

Preventing condensation in the home is your responsibility. But the good news is there are steps you can take to stop it happening. There are many ways to reduce the risk of

condensation in your home which are listed below.

You can treat little spots of mould quickly and easily. Use three parts warm water and one part bleach. Make sure you dry the wall after cleaning it.

If this doesn't work, speak to the Co-operative.

Do:

- ✓ keep a window open when drying clothes indoors;
- ✓ keep the internal kitchen door closed when cooking;
- ✓ keep lids on pots and pans when cooking;
- ✓ use an extractor fan in the kitchen and bathroom;
- ✓ open the window after a bath or shower and open the door;

- ✓ try to keep a good level of background heating throughout the property;
- ✓ try to dry clothes outside where possible;
- ✓ Make sure air can circulate by leaving gaps between furniture and wall.

Don't:

- ✗ dry clothes over warm radiators;
- ✗ block off any ventilation around the house such as air bricks or trickle vents on windows;
- ✗ use tumble driers unless they are self-condensing or vented with a hose outside;
- ✗ overfill cupboards and wardrobes;
- ✗ keep furniture and beds hard against walls;
- ✗ Keep the door open when cooking or bathing.

Fire Safety within a common stairwell

As you will be aware, it's everyone's responsibility to ensure your property and the common close is kept clear of hazards and obstructions. This is to ensure everyone can evacuate the building safely if instructed to do so.

No items should be stored in the communal areas. This includes children's toys/bikes/scooters, decorative items such as plants, mobility scooters etc. These pose a risk for a number of reasons.

They can serve as combustible materials and could also potentially block a safe exit from the building.

You can request a free Home Fire Safety Visit from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service via their website is: <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/at-home/home-fire-safety-visit> or we can make a referral, just contact us if you would like a visit.



The office will be closed **Friday 23 September 2022 and Monday 26 September 2022** for the September Weekend.

Useful Numbers

(Including Emergency Contacts)

- » **Saltire Facilities Management Ltd**
Emergency Repair Number **0845 606 1555** (all gas central heating faults 24 hours)
- » **Saltire Facilities Management Ltd**
Servicing Number **01698 743647**
- » **Rodgers and Johnston** (all other out of hour EMERGENCY REPAIRS) **0844 247 2120** (Freephone number **0800 9992520**)
- » **North Lanarkshire Council** (housing benefits and council tax) **01698 403210**
- » **North Line** – North Lanarkshire's **0345 143 0015** contact centre dealing with Bulk uplift, bins, roads and lighting, abandoned vehicles, Dog fouling, dog nuisance, gritting
- » **TRANSCO (National Grid)** (smell of gas) **0800 111 999**
- » **POLICE SCOTLAND 101 (999 EMERGENCY)**
- » **FIRE BRIGADE (999 EMERGENCY)** or text "FIRE" to **80800** from your mobile phone
- » **SCOTTISH WATER 0800 077 8778**
- » **ELECTRICAL DAMAGE** to electrical supply or network equipment Call **105** or your own electrical supplier
- » **CRIMESTOPPERS 0800 555 111**
- » **ALLPAY 0330 041 6497**

Getting Involved

We want you to review our service standards and performance to ensure the services we provide are of the highest quality.

We believe your knowledge and experience of the services we provide is the best way for us to learn and improve. It involves sharing information, respecting different views and perspectives, problem solving and working together.

If you would like to get involved with tenant participation please contact the Co-operative to register your interest.

Complaints Handling Procedure

The Co-operative values complaints and compliments. We use complaints to help improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please let us know. Our complaints handling procedure explains how to make a complaint and what you can expect from us. Visit our website to read our Complaints Handling Procedure at **www.gphc.org.uk**

E-Mail Address

If you would like to receive future copies of our newsletter to your email address rather than by post please forward your name and address to **enquiries@gphc.org.uk** and we will arrange this.

Different Formats

We are striving to make this newsletter as accessible as possible for everyone. Should you require a copy in large print, audio or in another language, please contact our office on **01698 687222** where our staff will be happy to assist.

CONTACT US



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01698 687222



enquiries@gphc.org.uk



www.gphc.org.uk



supporting
social
employers



tenant
participation
advisory service

