

Menopause - the Musical

No! Your eyes are not deceiving you! Our competition offers two pairs of tickets for the best seats in the house to see this hysterical, sell out, show at the Kings Theatre on Monday 25 February. See page 2 inside for competition details.



LifeLink (www.lifelink.org.uk) (Tel: 552 4434)

Self harming and thoughts of suicide
are more common than you think.

You are not alone.
Contact LifeLink. Phone 552 4434



Useful Phone Numbers

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Heating/Hot Water Emergencies (James Frew Ltd) | 01294 468 113/0870 242 5037 |
| All Other Emergencies (City Building) | 0800 595 595 |
| Blochairn Housing Association (Staff on Call) | 07976 569 939 |
| Housing Benefit & Council Tax Revenue Centre | 287 5050 |
| Scottish Power | 0800 027 0072 |
| Scottish Power Emergencies | 0800 092 92 90 |
| Scottish Gas (Escapes) | 0800 111 999 |
| Clean Glasgow | 0300 343 7027 |
| City Council - Pest Control and Cleansing | 287 9700 |
| Police SCOTLAND | 101 (in an Emergency, dial 999) |
| CCTV Cameras - StreetWatch | 287 9999 |
| Social Work Services Emergencies | 0800 811 505 |
| Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) | 945 6350 or 0800 80 70 60 |
| THISTLE Tenants Risks Insurance | 0845 601 7007 |

Staff Contact Details

| | | |
|--|------------------------|----------|
| Michael Carberry (Director) | michael@blochairn.org | 553 0023 |
| Angela MacDonald (Housing Services Officer) | angela@blochairn.org | 553 0022 |
| Danielle Murphy (Housing Services Assistant) | Danielle@blochairn.org | 553 0021 |
| Kaye McFall (Housing Services Assistant) | kaye@blochairn.org | 553 0024 |
| Carol Niven (Finance Assistant) | carol@blochairn.org | 553 0020 |

Scottish Charity No. SCO40816

Property Factor No. PF000257

February 2019

Blochairn Housing Association Newsletter

Major Repairs Programme

The 2nd phase of the Association's Major Repairs Programme at Dunolly St/Millburn St is nearing completion and Phase 3 began in January at Blochairn Road/Cloverbank Street. At the end of March we will return to Phase 1 in Roystonhill to decorate the closes and paint external railings. This will finish things off nicely. The painters will move on to Dunolly Street/Millburn Street and finish at Blochairn Road/Cloverbank Street as the Major Repair work is completed, probably around May time. Decoration at other properties will be considered under Planned Maintenance later in the year. Many external railings are in poor condition and these will be dealt with separately from internal closes. Later in 2019 the Planned Maintenance programme will include new bathrooms in Contracts 4 and (19/27 Dunolly Street Sandmill Street). Contact the Association's staff if you want more information on the Major Repairs or Planned Maintenance programmes for 2019.



Rent Consultation



They say that there are only two things certain in life - death and taxes. But there is another thing that's certain. Rent increases come along every year! Details of the Association's proposed increase for 2019/2020 are inside. The article includes information on expenditure over the past year and what is planned for the future. Your views and comments would be very welcome. We look forward to hearing from you.

Facebook



Check out the Association's Facebook page. It has 695 "Followers". There's a mix of serious stuff but humour as well. Why not "Like" us?

Menopause - the Musical



Menopause the Musical is heading out on another UK wide tour.

This hysterical show packed full of one-liners about night sweats, hot flushes and memory loss is backed by an instantly recognisable soundtrack of innuendo-laden versions of 60s, 70s and 80s pop classics.

An all-singing, all-dancing comedy set in a department store, where four women with seemingly nothing in common, meet by chance and make fun of their woeful lives experiencing "The Change".

They soon bond as they realise that the menopause is no longer "The Silent Passage", but an unavoidable stage in every woman's life.

The hysterical and uplifting **Menopause - The Musical** will have you laughing, and singing, all the way home.

The show has played sold out tours across the world so call your girlfriends and book now for the ultimate girls night out.

The Association has two pairs of tickets for best seats in the house to give away. To be in the draw just get your competition entry to the Association's office by Friday 15 February.

Now, don't think this is a competition for women only! Guys can enter too. If they have the bottle - and a good sense of humour!

To be in the draw tell us::

1. What did Maureen Nolan spend £7,500 on last year?
2. Who plays the character "Heather Trott"?
3. Who plays the character "Amy Howard"?
4. Rebecca Wheatley has recorded two Top Ten singles. True or False?
5. Who appeared as a character called "Tampy Lillette" in 1998?

Tenant Bonus Scheme at Christmas

In 2018 the Association tried a new way of managing the Tenant Bonus Scheme at Christmas. The idea was to involve residents in the decision about whether they should receive a Christmas Bonus. They had to tell us whether 1) they had kept to the terms of their Tenancy Agreement 2) they felt they had contributed to the wellbeing of their community 3) they wanted to receive the Christmas Bonus.



We were confident that folk would be honest. And, of 201 (70%) tenants who returned their questionnaire, only 3 were refused a bonus payment. So, 198 (69%) tenants received a £75 bonus. The new way of working was well received so we'll look to use the same procedure for Christmas 2019.

Unlike tired Santa, there is no rest for housing staff. They will continue to be busy throughout the year trying to ensure that your area and your community are as good as they can be. And they will be looking for your help.

Blochairn employs only 5 staff, fewer than other housing associations. It can do that because of the good working relationship it has established with residents and with the wider community. It is also important that the vast majority of residents are really good tenants and good neighbours. They have helped the Association to create a place where people want to live; a place that they are proud to say they come from.

The Tenant Bonus Scheme has helped to develop that partnership. And tenants have been asked several times over the years whether the Bonus provides good value for money. The answer has always been a resounding - YES!

We look forward to another year where tenants pay their rent, look after their house and property and behave in a decent, neighbourly fashion. That contribution is so important and it is important that it is recognised.

The Tenant Bonus Scheme isn't perfect. It relies on subjective judgement and can be difficult to administer. But, together the Association, its staff and its residents can continue to work together; always seeking ways of improving the environment for the benefit of all.



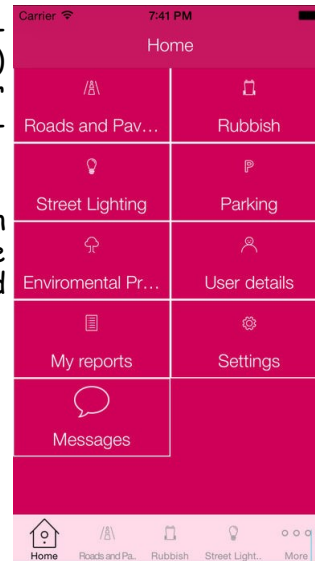
My Glasgow App

Have you downloaded the "My Glasgow" App yet? Use it to report problems, like "Environmental" (graffiti and dog fouling) or "Rubbish" (litter and illegal dumping). Order a bulk uplift or report that your bins have not been emptied. You can even report overgrown weeds or a fault in street lighting.



The App recognises your location and you can take a photo and send it instantly. A message confirms the report has been received and when it has been dealt with.

It's brilliant! Give it a try!



Christmas Competition



Congratulations to William Brant who won the "Name the Actors" Christmas Competition. This was a difficult competition but this seems to be William's forte. He won the Movie Competition last Christmas!



Housing Services Assistants



The Association's Housing Service Assistants are the **first point of contact for all residents**. Please speak to your Housing Services Assistant about anything you are concerned about. You will see them out and about regularly. They will be making sure that your property, and the area generally, are as good as they can be. Listed below are properties each Housing Services Assistant is responsible for.



Danielle Murphy:
Cloverbank Gdns
Cloverbank Street
Dunolly Street
Sandmill Street

danielle@blochairn.org
Direct Dial: 553 0021

Kaye McFall:
Blochairn Place
Blochairn Road
Millburn Street
Roystonhill

kaye@blochairn.org
Direct Dial: 553 0024

National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO)



The NASSO is part of Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). The NASSO Awareness Group (NAG) is a group of housing associations who are challenging government policy on housing sex offenders in their communities. NAG Members are located across Glasgow and include: Blochairn; Craigdale; Easthall Park; Elderpark; Gardeen; Kendoon; Kingsridge/Cleddens; Milnbank; Pineview; Provanhall and Ruchazie.

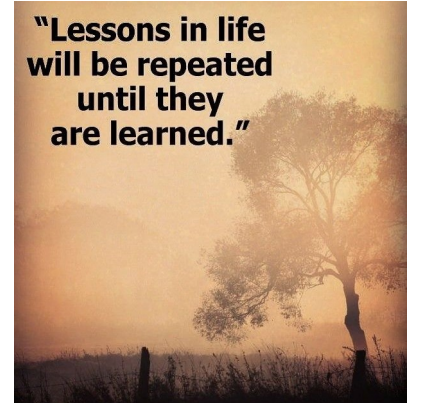
Police carry out a check on who lives nearby before a sex offender is allocated a house. But what happens when a house becomes available to let near to where a sex offender lives? Blochairn has been asking that question since Mark Cummings was murdered by sex offender, Stuart Leggate, in Royston in 2004.

In 2012, GHA tenant, George Cameron, was 68 when he seriously sexually assaulted his neighbour's 4 year old son. Lord Pentland said, when he sentenced Cameron: "It is clear that the offence was the culmination of a sustained campaign, in which you groomed the child with a view to gaining his trust and also the trust of his mother. Your conduct throughout your relationship with the child and his mother was manipulative and devious". In 2013, a Serious Case Review made several recommendations, including a review of how houses are allocated. Because there had been no checks, no communication between Police, social work and housing authorities before Cameron's victim's family moved in. There was no system in place.

Six years after the Serious Case Review, GHA has refused to tell the NAG how it has changed its allocation system or how it has dealt with the Significant Case Review recommendations. When the NAG complained the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman decided that GHA could choose whether to not to answer the question. The Scottish Housing Regulator decided that it was the Scottish Government's responsibility as the management of sex offenders was covered by legislation. But NAG members have been there before and have met with a Housing Minister on four occasions.

Under Freedom of Information, Glasgow City Council claimed that it had no record of why it had not carried out its own recommendations to follow the Significant Case Review decisions. The Council stated that it was only one party at meetings when decisions were made, even when the Council called the meetings. Incredibly, the FOI Commissioner accepted this response.

The NAG will meet in February to decide its next move. Some members will, naturally, be reluctant to argue with their own Regulator. Blochairn's Management Committee have decided that these questions must be answered.



Rents 2019/2020 - Consultation

Every year the Association prepares a budget to manage and maintain houses; run the organisation; pay bank loans; put aside money for future maintenance and generally look after the area and environment. The aim is to provide a first class service; doing more than traditional housing management and maintenance, and to provide:

- an extensive landscape maintenance service
- intensive, hands on estate management
- a 1st class repairs service, with most repairs carried out within 24 hours
- a member of staff on call 24/7 to speak to tenants in an emergency
- strong links with local schools and with Royston Youth Action
- a £75 Christmas Bonus and a Monthly Prize Draw for tenants

Blochairn's rents compare well with other housing associations but direct comparison is difficult:

- Houses and room sizes differ
- Different government grant levels when houses were built or modernised affects rents
- Some associations employ more staff and pay higher salaries than others
- Services are often different
- Few, if any, other associations offer a £75 cash Christmas Bonus to its tenants

From 2004 to 2018, Blochairn rents increased, on average, by only 0.21% above inflation. Some increases were less than inflation and there was a rent freeze in 2014, as the Association tried to help tenants through painful changes in the UK government's Welfare Benefits system. The Association has also bought in advice and support services from GEMAP and the Simon Community to help its residents.

In 2018, a £1.7 million Major Repairs programme began on buildings modernised in 1990's. Planned Maintenance in other properties (new kitchens, boilers and bathrooms) took spending to over £2 million. Major Repairs works will be completed in May and, later in 2019, further Planned Maintenance will renew bathrooms in Contracts 4 and 5 (Dunolly Street and Sandmill Street).

| Year | % RPI | % incr | Diff |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 2019/2020 | 2.7 | 4.2 | 1.50 |
| 2018/2019 | 4.10 | 5.60 | 1.50 |
| 2017/2018 | 2.50 | 3.50 | 1.00 |
| 2016/2017 | 1.20 | 2.00 | 0.80 |
| 2015/2016 | 1.60 | 2.00 | 0.40 |
| 2014/2015 | 2.70 | 0.00 | -2.70 |
| 2013/2014 | 3.10 | 3.00 | -0.10 |
| 2012/2013 | 4.80 | 4.00 | -0.80 |
| 2011/2012 | 4.80 | 4.00 | -0.80 |
| 2010/2011 | 2.40 | 1.00 | -1.40 |
| 2009/2010 | 0.90 | 3.00 | 2.10 |
| 2008/2009 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 0.00 |
| 2007/2008 | 4.40 | 5.00 | 0.60 |
| 2006/2007 | 2.20 | 3.50 | 1.30 |
| 2005/2006 | 3.50 | 3.50 | 0.00 |
| 2004/2005 | 2.80 | 4.00 | 1.20 |
| Total | 47.70 | 52.30 | 4.6 |
| Average | 2.98 | 3.27 | 0.29 |

Rents 2019/2020 - Consultation

| House Size | Date Improved or Built | (Sample) Monthly Rent | New Monthly Rent | Proposed Weekly Increase | In 2017 the Association reviewed its finances and created a 5 year Treasury Management plan. |
|------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 2apt | Pre 2000 | 241.82 | 251.98 | 2.34 | It borrowed £5.5 million from Unity Bank Trust to clear loans (mortgages) from development works between 1992 and 2011 and to fund a Major Repairs programme. The plan required annual rent increases of the Retail Price Index (RPI) rise plus 1.5%. On 16 January RPI was 2.7%. Therefore, the proposed rent increase for 2019/2020 is 4.2%. |
| | 2002 | 253.56 | 264.21 | 2.46 | |
| 3apt | Pre 2000 | 279.06 | 290.78 | 2.70 | |
| | 2002 | 302.10 | 314.79 | 2.93 | |
| | 2011 | 353.24 | 368.08 | 3.42 | |
| 4apt | Pre 2000 | 297.89 | 310.40 | 2.89 | |
| | 2002 | 399.80 | 416.59 | 3.87 | |
| | 2011 | 389.78 | 406.15 | 3.78 | |
| 5apt | 2011 | 475.05 | 495.00 | 4.60 | |

If you want to know more about any housing association's finances, rent levels, salaries, etc. see the Scottish Housing Regulator's web site. At <https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/find-and-compare-landlords> you can compare Blochairn to other associations.

When you look at Blochairn's track record on rent increases and see what is planned for the future, what do you think? Reasonable? Standard of service too high or too low? Should more be done? Or should some things be cut? Let us know what you think before Monday 25 February. Write to us or email michael@blochairn.org or give us a call if you want to discuss any of these issues.

| Proposed Spending 2018/2019 | | £ |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--|
| Management Expenses | 368,000 | Cost of running the organisation |
| Property Maintenance | 137,500 | Routine repairs, landscaping, etc. |
| Gas Service Contract | 50,000 | Incl Annual Gas Safety Checks |
| Planned Maintenance | 265,000 | Kitchens, boilers, bathrooms, etc. |
| Major Repairs | 474,000 | Contracts 2 & 3 |
| Community Fund | 19,000 | E.g. Tenants' Christmas Bonuses |
| Buildings Insurance | 29,000 | Property Insurance (<u>not contents</u>) |
| Loan Interest Repayments | 120,000 | Covers bank loans (mortgages) |
| TOTAL | 1,462,500 | |