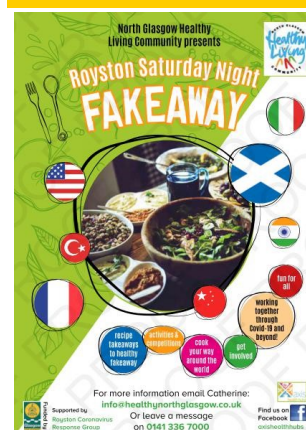


Emergency Cover over the Holidays



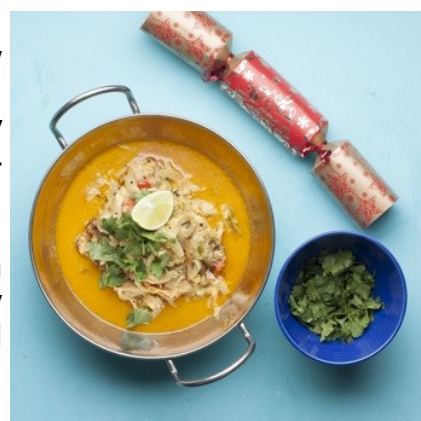
Traditionally, we open the office between Christmas and New Year. This year, in recognition of the effort that our staff have made over a long, stressful nine months, we will close between Friday 25 December 2020 and Wednesday 6 January 2021. Emergency services will be available. In an emergency, call James Frew Ltd (for heating/hot water) or City Building (for all other repairs). An 'Emergency' is when there is a risk to health and safety or to prevent serious damage, e.g. burst pipes. Our target response time is within 4 hours. After the emergency other work might be dealt with after 6 January. No heating or hot water is not an emergency. But James Frew Ltd. will respond, within reason. If you call before 19.00 they will try to come out. Otherwise, they will come the following day. Our Staff are on call if you need to speak to us in an emergency. Hopefully, you won't need them! Two questions to ask yourself. 1) Do you know how to turn the water off if there is a burst? If you're not sure please find out now. Ask your family, friends, neighbours. 2) Do you have house contents insurance? If not, please think about it now - before anything happens!

Saturday Night Fakeaway



Thanks to our friends at the North Glasgow Healthy Living Community's Royston Team, we have enclosed a copy of their 'Saturday Night Fakeaway' recipe booklet which provides recipes from around the world.

It includes great Christmas ideas and even has a recipe for a Boxing Day Curry! Why not try something different? Have a Go! And tell us how you get on.



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

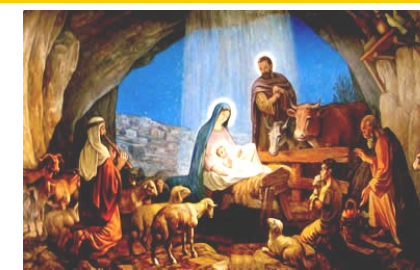


Useful Phone Numbers

Heating/Hot Water Emergencies (James Frew Ltd)	01294 468 113 or 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 Emergencies	0800 111 999
Clean Glasgow	0300 343 7027
City Council - Pest Control and Cleansing	287 9700
City Council - Council Tax	0845 600 8040
Police SCOTLAND	101 (or, in an Emer-
gency, 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



Blochairn Housing Association Newsletter



**As we celebrate the birth of Jesus of Nazareth
the Committee and Staff
of Blochairn Housing Association wish you a
Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year in 2021**

Happy Holiday!



Instead of our traditional small Christmas gift to residents over 60 and under 16 years we deposited £10 into each of their accounts. We didn't get our calendars printed this year. We'll be back to normal next year.....hopefully! Happy Holidays!



Footprints

We make no apology for repeating this item from last year. If it comforts just one person it's worthwhile.

Jesus, and his message of peace and love, has inspired us for more than 2000 years. Whether you believe, as Christians do, that he was the son of God, or you see him as a prophet; a messenger of God, his story has influenced the course of human history and has affected the lives of billions of people. Those who choose to live without religion can respect the man who spoke for the poor and the dispossessed and who challenged authority. Oh, how he would be welcome now!

*'I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.
Across the sky flashed scenes from my life.
For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; One
belonged to me, and the other to the Lord.
When the last scene of my life flashed before us I looked back at
the footprints in the sand. I noticed that many times along the path
of my life there was only one set of footprints.
I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest
times in my life
This really bothered me, and I questioned the Lord about it.
"Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you would walk
with me all the way.
But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life there is only one set
of footprints.
I don't understand why, in times when I needed you the most, you should leave me.
The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child. I love you, and I would never, never leave
you during your times of trial and suffering.
When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you'.*



Our Facebook page has a mix of serious stuff and humour.
Please check it out and 'Follow' us.
We have has 879 'Followers'. Can we get to 1000?
You can find lots of useful information on our web site at www.blochairn.org



Women in Technology

My name is Sophie and I am currently working in a project management role with Glasgow Girls Club using technology from Handheld Community. As a student completing an undergraduate degree in Law and Social Policy, I never expected to be involved in a job where I was in the field of technology as its not an area which I had ever considered before. Most students have part time jobs in retail or hospitality industry so, for me, this was very appealing to do something completely different and out of my comfort zone!

Although its completely new to me, I couldn't have settled into the role better. The technology which I am using through Handheld is so simple and has totally negated the myth that to work within this sector you need to be a genius in coding or design. I have never worked with this type of product before so was understandably apprehensive, but I am so glad this didn't put me off as I am now loving the work I am doing. Starting a new role is nerve-racking at any point, however doing so during a pandemic has been a fabulous, albeit unusual, experience. There are people I have been working closely with for months and haven't even met them in person. Everything on the planning side has been done via zoom meetings and email correspondence which is strange at first. However, I have quickly gotten used to this and love the feel of working from home as it brings a huge aspect of flexibility which is vital for me given that I am studying alongside this. It has allowed me to work with a broad range of community champions, from MP's to regeneration for housing officers, to university lecturers and I have developed a wealth of knowledge and experience due to this.

The main project which we are carrying out is a community orientated digital directory which is targeted not only at promoting local business, but also at allowing people to know what is going on their area in community/charity based work, such as, mental health support, food banks and much more. For many people, anything with the words "technology" or "digital" might put them off instantly just because they aren't a computer whizz, but what Handheld have developed is so easy to navigate that anyone can use it! Importantly, it can be used by people who may be otherwise digitally excluded and don't use social media platforms. The communities we have been working on are touching distance from me, meaning much of the content included can be accessed by people in my area and surrounding. For me, this is amazing as I feel a sense of personal connection with my work knowing that it is helping people locally. I feel I am filling a gap between the need for and access to services. Many of these critical organisations, such as, food banks and crisis support can struggle to reach a wide audience, so we hope in doing this work that we are allowing them to be recognised and used to their full potential by those who need it most.

One thing I feel important to touch on is the stigma of women in technology roles and that there is a huge gap in this field. This is something I have noticed, largely due to the fact that, in working with community groups I have found that, although not all, this is predominately female led. Meanwhile, technology roles are predominately male orientated. For women in community groups now to be working alongside and taking advantage of technology to expand the work they are doing is vital. I would encourage any female who has interest in technology to go for it, and I guarantee you will love doing so.

Lastly, working with Glasgow Girls Club and Handheld Community on such an important and progressive project has been a dream come true. It has allowed me to see first-hand how a lot of the work I study within social policy is actually implemented in the real world. The experience I have gained and knowledge developed is remarkable and I am excited to see what the future holds for myself working with such great organisations.

Article by (Blochairn's very own resident) Sophie Thomson.

this girl
in tech

It's important to tackle the stigma of women in tech. I've noticed that while there are many women leading the way in community development, tech roles are predominately filled by men. It is vital for female community leaders now to be taking advantage of digital to expand the work they are doing.

GIRLS CLUB
GLASGOW

Sophie Thomson, 20
Project Manager



Fire Safety at Christmas

Blochairn had its first major fire in 25 years a few months ago. The resident had to live temporarily with relatives whilst extensive repair work was carried out. It brought home, yet again, how important fire safety is.

More than 500 accidental house fires were recorded across Scotland over the festive season a couple of years ago, according to **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)**. Firefighters responded to 509 incidents. Of 91 people, who were casualties of these fires, 37 were aged 60 or over – more than 40%.

SFRS highlight the dangers of cooking while under the influence of alcohol. The festive period is traditionally one of the busiest times of year for SFRS and its partners – with the increase in accidental house fires during the period typically caused by a higher use of heating and electrical appliances - as well as higher alcohol consumption, decorations and the traditional use of candles also playing a role.

Ross Haggart, assistant chief officer, SFRS director of prevention and protection, said: "Ultimately, we want people to remember the festive period for all the right reasons. When our firefighters have to attend a fire in someone's house at Christmas time, and we enter a house which is burning but full of Christmas presents and decorations – it's heart-breaking. But unfortunately, the festive period sees potentially deadly combinations come together – increased use of electricity, drinking alcohol and cooking, decorations being put up near heat sources. It's all too easy to think that it will never happen to you - but it can. That's why we are appealing to communities across Scotland – don't let Christmas end, or your New Year start, with tragedy."

SFRS work closely with local communities and partner agencies to keep Scotland safe from fire and other emergencies. However, they urge communities to play their part by ensuring that the most elderly and vulnerable members of the community are properly supported. They appeal to people to check if their elderly relatives, neighbours or friends are in need of SFRS support. Home fire safety visits are an important part of SFRS prevention work that help safeguard the public – especially vulnerable residents. These are free pre-arranged visits where SFRS staff identify signs to protect people and their homes. SFRS staff can also identify hazards in the home, help plan escape routes and provide information about smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms.

During the festive period, the SFRS traditionally sees a rise in incidents related to cooking while someone is under the influence of **alcohol**. SFRS recommend – please do not drink, then attempt to cook. Consider making something beforehand and have it prepared, or wait until you are no longer affected by alcohol."

Last year **Community Safety Minister Ash Denham** said: "While we want people to be able to celebrate and relax over the festive period, it is extremely important that they also keep themselves and others safe. For that reason I'd urge people to follow the advice of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and act responsibly."



Keep Your Building Safe! Keep common areas clear!



Think what you would do in the event of a fire. Do you have a **Fire Escape Plan**? Don't have anything in the common areas that would block your escape (common areas are not for storage). Imagine a smoke filled close - you can't see - you're trying to get your family out. You don't want to be tripping over **bikes or scooters or prams**. And fire fighters need to get into the building quickly. So, please **keep your own belongings in your own house. Keep common areas clear of clutter**. Keep your building safe!

Glasgow City Council's Bulk Uplift Service - the End?!



When Glasgow City Council suspended its bulk uplift service at the start of the COVID 19 lockdown in March we all assumed that it was for a short time. Not only did suspension last 9 months, but the service has not been brought back in its previous form. Residents will be asked to book an uplift and will be charged for collection. We don't have all the details yet. How will charges be set for tenement properties? How will owner occupiers get their bill? We don't know. The City Council will have a publicity campaign in the New Year to fully inform its citizens. If we learn any more, meantime, we will let you know. Rather than try to summarise the Council's position we have enclosed a copy of recent correspondence. Thanks to the support and co-operation of our residents we lasted 6 months without bringing in outside contractors. In September we engaged Clyde Valley Landscapes to collect bulk waste on Wednesday mornings. This is working well. Clyde Valley will collect bulk waste on Wednesday 23 December and Wednesday 30 December 2020 and they will continue into the New Year.

Christmas Quiz

Here's a wee fun Christmas Quiz to try in your Christmas Bubble!

- There are 365 days in a year. What number is Christmas Day?
358 359 360
- Who played George Bailey in the film, It's a Wonderful Life?
James Stewart John Stewart Christopher Stewart
- In which country did the custom of putting up a Christmas tree originate?
Norway Germany Sweden
- Which department store was in the original 1947 version of the film, Miracle on 34th Street?
Bloomingdale's Saks Mace's
- Who wrote 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas!'?
Roald Dall Dr Seuss JK Rowling
- How many points does a snowflake have?
6 8 10
- What is the biggest selling Christmas single, globally?
All I Want For Christmas is You White Christmas O Holy Night
- What is the chemical formula of snow?
H2O C2H6O CH4
- In the song, The Twelve Days of Christmas, what does my true love give on the ninth day?
Golden Rings Ladies Dancing Maids a milking
- In Victorian England, what type of workers were known as 'robins' because of their red uniforms?
Police Officers Chimney Sweeps Postmen



Part-time volunteering opportunities at Roystonhill Community Hub



Are you looking to get more involved with your local community? Do you enjoy helping people in your community? Are you looking for a great opportunity to learn new skills, give back to your community and add to your CV? **If this sounds like you the Roystonhill Hub needs you!** Roystonhill Hub is offering you the opportunity to help out with local groups. We have weekly groups and are looking for Volunteers to get involved for a few hours a week or month, whenever it suits YOU! Perhaps you'd like to contribute a couple of hours as a one-off workshop? Or maybe you'd like to take part in weekly activities? We know that your time is precious so we will work with you to make sure you get the most out of your experience with us. From working directly with the groups to running your own sessions, there are many aspects of the organisation you can choose to get involved with! If you are a good communicator who

shares our values of equality and co-operation, Roystonhill Hub invites you to get in touch. We currently have opportunities for Administration/Reception work/Activities Planning/Customer Service. If you are interested in any of our opportunities please give Angie Fraser or Catriona Donald a call on 0141-212-7386 or alternatively you can email at volunteer@spireview.org.uk or volunteerassist@spireview.org.uk

Tenant Bonus Scheme: Christmas Bonus for Every Tenant

In 2001, Blochairn became the first housing organisation in Glasgow to offer a cash bonus to its tenants. We wanted to recognise how important it is that tenants play their part in their community; making their area a place where people want to live - a place to be proud to say they come from.



The Bonus Scheme helps us to provide a first class service and a pleasant living environment because it encourages residents to work together. It's about co-operation; working together. We know that some people will struggle to pay rent. If they work with us and keep to a payment plan, that's fine. If there is a problem with nuisance to neighbours or with the stairs/close/garden/bin store and we need to visit and write over and over again, that's a problem. In 2004, we introduced a monthly Prize Draw. Of course, you need to be 'in it to win it'.



The Christmas Bonus was originally £52 but was increased to £75 in 2012.

The Bonus is not a legal right. There is subjective assessment, which isn't easy. A great looking property might have only one or two people doing all the work. The property might look terrible but one or two are really trying. Our Staff want everyone to receive a Christmas Bonus. Telling someone a few weeks before Christmas that it can't be paid is heart-breaking.



In 2018 we began using a questionnaire, asking tenants to consider whether they had kept to their Tenancy Agreement and whether they felt they had contributed to the wellbeing of the community. As expected, people were honest. In fact, fewer received the Bonus in the past two years. The questionnaire asked about things like:



- * Is my home in reasonable condition with a reasonable standard of hygiene and cleanliness? Is there paint on radiators, fans, light fittings or kitchen units?
- * Is my rent account clear? Am I co-operating to deal with problems?
- * Do I have outstanding debts (e.g. rechargeable repairs)? Am I keeping to an arrangement?
- * Is my front garden and back court tidy and free of litter?
- * Is my bin store clean and tidy; refuse bagged and placed into the bin and bulk refuse dealt with properly?
- * Are my stairs and close clean, tidy and free of litter; brushed and washed regularly? Are walls, banisters and windows clean? Are bags of rubbish, boots, shoes, etc. outside the door? Are prams, bikes, scooters, etc. lying around?
- * Do I report repairs when they are needed. Do I give reasonable access to workmen? Is my Gas Safety Service done on time?
- * Do I report graffiti or clean it myself?
- * Are my children causing a problem for other residents? Are they helpful, thoughtful and considerate towards their neighbours? Do they drop litter?
- * Do my pets cause a nuisance? Do I allow them to foul any common area?
- * Do I treat the Association's staff reasonably? Am I ever threatening or abusive?

This year has been really, really difficult for us, as an organisation, and for our community. The COVID 19 global pandemic has taken its toll. People are worn out and weary (including our staff!). There's light at the end of the tunnel with news of a vaccine but we are still months away from a return to normality. So, we decided that every tenant could receive the £75 Christmas Bonus this year.

If you have not already done so, let us have your bank details and we'll transfer cash into your account. **We need your bank details before 5pm on Monday 21 December.** Call 553 1601 or email admin@blochairn.org.

Thank you to every one of you, young and old, who help us to make Blochairn a place where people are happy to live in and are proud to say they come from.

Christmas Competition

This year nearly broke me mentally and physically but it taught me so much

So I finally get what my granny was saying all those years ago. Those blows to the body and the mind have been good for this soul of mine. I hope.

(Neil McKay, journalist)