

Tenant Bonus at Christmas

The Christmas Bonus usually requires a bit of an assessment to make sure that those who receive it have kept to their Tenancy Agreement and otherwise behaved in a decent, reasonable fashion towards neighbours and as part of our community. In recent years tenants have filled in a short self assessment questionnaire and around 70% claimed their Christmas Bonus. As 2020 was such a horrendous year we decided that the Christmas Bonus should be offered to every tenant. Around 96% of tenants took up the offer. Several tenants asked us to pass on their £75 to someone in our community who needed it more. Our thanks go to them for this wonderful gesture. And we can pass on the grateful thanks from those who received the extra £75 when they needed it most. As we could not deliver our traditional Christmas Gift to our pensioners (over 60) and young people (under 16) we popped £10 to their banks accounts. We look forward to everyone in our community working together in 2021 to make sure that Blochairn remains a place where people want to live and are proud to say they come from. Hopefully, Covid 19 will be a distant memory next Christmas!



Name the stars from their picture when they were young



We tried to devise a competition where you couldn't just google answers. We failed - we had googled the pictures to create the competition! DOH!! Anyway, thanks to everyone who entered. The winner of the £100 prize in the draw from correct answers was Rayan Mezhiordova (Millburn Street). Congratulations!

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 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



Contact Details

Web Site	https://blochairn.org/	
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Scottish Charity No. SCO40816

Property Factor No. PF000257

February 2021

Blochairn Housing Association Newsletter

COVID 19 LOCKDOWN UPDATE

The information issued to residents following the Scottish Government's statement on 5 January is still valid. Please continue to follow the guidance and advice issued by the Scottish Government. See <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>. You can also check the NHS Inform web site at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>.



Whilst our office is closed you can call us on 553 1601 or email admin@blochairn.org. Please do not come to the office. We can't discuss business at the door. Some staff may be working in the office with others working from home or on furlough. Some things will take longer to deal with and there may be some issues that we cannot deal with until after lockdown is lifted. Other organisations are also in lockdown so we cannot help with situations we might normally try to help with. For example, we have no control or influence over Glasgow City Council departments, such as, cleansing and bin collection. We will only carry out essential home visits, using appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and with social distancing. Whilst we are unable to carry out normal Estate Management visits please try to keep stairs, closes and bin stores as neat, clean and tidy as possible. If staff are out of the office they are carrying out essential visits or duties. Please do not ask them to engage in discussion with you. Please keep a safe distance (2 metres) from them. This is to protect them and to protect you and your family. Tell us if anyone in your household is showing symptoms or suffering from the effects of Covid 19. If you are in isolation we will not send staff or tradesmen to your house.

Only essential and emergency repairs are being carried out. If a contractor comes to your home he/she must exercise 'social distancing' (2 metres) and wear PPE. Please make sure that all members of your household members are aware of the need to exercise 'social distancing' from the contractor. Not all contractors will be working at full capacity so repairs might take a little longer although we will try to meet normal targets (e.g. respond to a emergency response – within 4 hours; routine repairs – within 5 working days).

Support Workers, Patrick Hannon (Welfare Benefits); Maureen McGowan (Financial Capability) and Geraldine Burgess (Tenancy Support) are working from home and will contact residents by telephone and email.

Rather than paying rent at a shop or post office you can pay at www.allpayments.net or download the 'ALLPAY' App or phone 0844 557 8321. Our web site has a 'Make a Payment' button or you can pay to by bank transfer (sort Code 83-21-27; account 00602339).

If your income is affected you should contact DWP. You can apply for Universal Credit on line at <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>. If you receive Housing Benefit phone us or email angela@blochairn.org. If rent arrears are due to COVID 19 affecting your income we will agree a reasonable plan with you when the situation is back to normal. But please make sure that you speak to us now if you are affected

Go to <https://blochairn.org/> and <https://www.facebook.com/blochairnha> for regular information updates or download the Blochairn App to your mobile phone. You will also find other news on our Facebook page, as well as, general information, humour, etc. and you can 'Like' and 'Follow' our page (we have 888 'Followers').



Rents 2021/2022 - Consultation

Every year the Association prepares a budget to manage and maintain houses; run the organisation; pay bank loans; save money for future maintenance and generally look after the area and environment. The aim is to provide a 1st class service, more than traditional housing management and maintenance, and:

- 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
- Free books for under 5's every month

In 2020 an independent study found that Blochairn's rents are affordable to its traditional client group. The report can be found on our web site. Blochairn's rents compare well with other housing associations but direct comparison is difficult:

- Houses and room sizes are different
- Varying government grants affect private finance. Higher private finance means higher rents
- Some associations employ more staff and pay higher salaries and provide different services
- Blochairn provides tenant support services through GEMAP and the Simon Community
- No other association offers a £75 cash Christmas Bonus to its tenants
- Blochairn works closely with its Young People through local schools; Royston Youth Action and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Over the past 18 years, rents have increased, on average, by little more than inflation between 2004 — 2020. Some increases were below inflation and there was a rent freeze in 2014 when we tried to help tenants through painful changes in the UK government's Welfare Benefits system.

Blochairn reviewed its finances in 2017 and borrowed £5.5million to clear loans from early housing developments (1992—2011) and to fund a £1.7 million Major Repairs Programme. The financial plan required rent increases of RPI + 1.5% for 4 years.

The Major Repairs programme provided new cladding, gutters, downpipes and facia on 17 properties, plus new house windows and new close doors. Closes and railings were also decorated. The Planned Maintenance Programme was disrupted by the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown in 2020 but it is hoped that it can continue in 2021 with new bathrooms at Dunolly St and Sandmill St.; new close doors in Dunolly St and new flat entrance doors at Roystonhill.

Year	% RPI	% incr	Diff
2021/2022	1.2	2.7	1.5
2020/2021	2.2	3.7	1.5
2019/2020	2.7	4.2	1.5
2018/2019	4.1	5.6	1.5
2017/2018	2.5	3.5	1.0
2016/2017	1.2	2.0	0.8
2015/2016	1.6	2.0	0.4
2014/2015	2.7	0.0	-2.7
2013/2014	3.1	3.0	-0.1
2012/2013	4.8	4.0	-0.8
2011/2012	4.8	4.0	-0.8
2010/2011	2.4	1.0	-1.4
2009/2010	0.9	3.0	2.1
2008/2009	4.0	4.0	0.0
2007/2008	4.4	5.0	0.6
2006/2007	2.2	3.5	1.3
2005/2006	3.5	3.5	0.0
2004/2005	2.8	4.0	1.2
Total	51.1	58.7	7.6
Average	2.8	3.3	0.4

Rents 2021/2022 - Consultation

House Size	Date Improved or Built	Current Monthly Rent	New Monthly Rent	Monthly Increase	Weekly Increase
2apt	Pre 2000	261.30	268.36	7.06	1.63
	2002	273.99	281.39	7.40	1.71
3apt	Pre 2000	301.54	309.68	8.14	1.88
	2002	326.44	335.25	8.81	2.03
	2011	381.70	392.01	10.31	2.38
4apt	Pre 2000	321.88	330.57	8.69	2.01
	2002	432.00	443.66	11.66	2.69
	2011	421.18	432.55	11.37	2.62
5apt	2011	513.32	527.18	13.86	3.20

The proposed rent increase for 2021/2022 is 2.7%.

When looking at sample rents in the table it's worth remembering that the £75 Christmas Bonus is worth £1.44 per week.

When you consider Blochairn's rent increases over the past 18 years; how the area is managed; what has been done to improve the area and what is planned for 2021/2022, what do you think? Is the proposed rent increase reasonable? Are Blochairn's standards too high or too low? Should more be done? Or less? Please let us know. Email michael@blochairn.org or give us a call if you want to discuss any of these issues. Please do this before 22 February 2021.

You can visit the Scottish Housing Regulator's web site for more information on the finances, rent levels, salaries, etc. of housing associations or to compare Blochairn's performance with other housing associations.

<u>Proposed Spending 2021/2022</u>	£	
Management Expenses	408,000	Cost of running the organisation
Property Maintenance	166,000	Routine repairs, landscaping, etc.
Gas Service Contract	50,500	Includes Annual Gas Safety Checks
Planned Maintenance	224,500	Kitchens, boilers, bathrooms, etc.
Community Fund	18,000	Includes Tenants' Christmas Bonus
Buildings Insurance	28,000	Property Insurance (<u>not contents</u>)
Bank Loan Repayments	317,000	Interest + Capital repayments
TOTAL	1,212,000	