



HOMeward

WINTER 2021

December 2021

Making Our House Your Home

Customer Services : 0300 123 0773



This year, at our AGM, we agreed to donate £1,000 to five charities. Representatives from each charity attended a hybrid meeting, along with staff and Board members, and gave a talk on the work their charities do and how the monies would be spent. The charities chosen were :



Befriending Lewis



...because life is 4 living!



Fundraising in aid of the RNLI



Supporting people living with neurological conditions



DIGITAL BURNS NIGHT - GET INVOLVED



We are excited to announce that we are hosting our first ever online event on Thursday 27 January 2022.

The evening is to give you the opportunity to have your say on what is important to you as a tenant of HHP whilst also allowing tenants, officers and some of HHP's key partners to come together for a fun and entertaining evening.

There will be a special guest host, exclusive musical performances, raffle prizes and much more!

Please contact us on 0300 123 0773 or at customerservices@hebrideanhousing.co.uk to register your interest in attending the event. Tenants who sign up for the event before Friday 14 January 2022 will receive a free Burns Night themed goodie bag.

Follow us on social media for further announcements

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



@HebHousing



@hebrideanhousing



Dolina Morrison, Tenant Participation Officer, held a Halloween Drop-In Session in Stornoway Library on the 30th of October. TPAS CEO, Lesley Baird, and Forum Chairman, Alasdair Mackenzie attended the event to find out more on tenant participation and how they can help tenants. It was a fun informal gathering where tenants relaxed with a coffee and cake and shared ideas.



"Work with us for a better service, we are always looking at ways to improve the service you receive, and we rely heavily on tenant involvement to do so. Your views are important!"

Getting involved is an essential part of HHP customer care and we need you, as a customer, to provide HHP with important feedback on the services they provide you. Your opinions can lead to HHP services being enhanced and improving better-quality homes for all HHP tenants. Also, towards strengthening neighbourhoods and community connections

We provide a range of opportunities for you to become involved, and have your say in how services are delivered, at a level that best suits your needs and interest

- Be able to see statistics from our satisfaction surveys and review HHP performance.
- Get involved in different working groups to focus closer on a particular service area.
- Attend national conferences as a tenant representative
- Gain a better understanding of the Housing Service
- Meet new people
- Gain new skills with our in-house training

Why not join our ARMCHAIR TENANT PANEL - act a critical friend and go into more detail on what HHP do well and areas for improvement. All from the comfort of your home.

Take part in ESTATE WALKABOUTS - where you can join TPAS and an HHP Housing Officer on estate inspection and provide feedback on any issues or concerns within the area.

TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY ACTION PLAN

Key Points

- Through the Tenant Participation Strategy, identify areas tenants are less satisfied and increase knowledge of HHP services
- Demonstrate value for money
- Increase HHP visibility on estates
- TPAS events to restart with a minimum of 6 a year (i.e drop in sessions)
- Increased use of scrutiny panels
- Use technology to enhance participation and make tenants feel like they have been listened to
- Use website for case studies to show how tenants have informed decisions



Dolina Morrison, Tenant Participation Officer
Email : dolina.morrison@tpasscotland.org.uk
Mobile : 07593550537/07469236548
Facebook Page : TPAS Western Isles

BLYTHSWOOD SHOE BOX APPEAL

A team of 4 from HHP, including John MacIver, Angus MacNeil, Jonathan Fairgrieve and Emma MacLeod, volunteered to help Blythswood with their Shoe Box Appeal collection this year. Well over 900 boxes left Stornoway, on board a Woody's Express lorry, ready for distribution to families in need across Eastern Europe.



Blythswood Care had a fantastic response to the Shoebox appeal 2021, with additional money collected and on its way to the Blythswood's main depot in Inverness. The boxes full of goodies included some wrapped in Harris Tweed, while most were decorated with brightly-coloured festive paper. The boxes will be shipped onwards from Inverness to impoverished communities in Ukraine, Albania, Bulgaria and Romania, where they will be distributed in time for Christmas.



One of our volunteers, Jonathan Fairgrieve, spent the summer of 2016 in Moldova and said:

"Filing a shoebox with a couple of bits and pieces may not seem like it will make a difference to someone's life is something I had thought for many years growing up. My mind-set completely changed when I was fortunate enough to spend some time in Nisporeni, Moldova. Here we spent time working at a children's holiday camp in the local park. Patrica's story in particular resonated with me. He was 9 years old and came along to the holiday camp every day. As soon as any snacks or lunch were handed out, it was gone before he had even sat down. What we take for granted, can be a gift to somebody else."

DON'T RISK YOUR HOUSE AT CHRISTMAS

We know that Christmas can be a busy and expensive time of year, with pressures to spend and the costs mounting up. To protect the roof over your head and make sure you aren't left out in the cold, you must keep paying your rent.

You are at risk of losing your home if you do not keep up with your rent payments. Please prioritise your rent and don't let your spending at Christmas get out of control. If you are having difficulty paying your rent, contact your Housing Officer as soon as possible on 0300 123 0773. We are here to help.

WAYS TO PAY RENT



- Use your rent payment card at any Post Office or Paypoint/Payzone



- By telephone using your debit or credit card by calling 01851 600502



- By Direct Debit Mandate on a weekly or monthly basis



- By Bank Standing Order

We are unable to take cash payments in our offices due to COVID-19



WATCH OUT!

FOR WINTER

Although our houses have central heating, there is still the risk of frozen or burst pipes during periods of heavy frost. Following the few simple steps below should help you to avoid any damage to your home:



FROZEN PIPES

- Turn off the water at the stopcock or tap or Surestop switch if you have one
- Switch off your immersion heater or boiler
- Keep your heating on if possible
- If water could come into contact with electrical fittings then switch off the electricity at the mains if safe to do so
- Call **0300 123 0773** to report the problem



BURST PIPES

- Turn on taps at sink, bath etc
- Turn off the water at the stopcock or tap or Surestop switch if you have one
- Switch off your immersion heater or boiler
- Turn on all taps to empty your tank

Remember burst pipes can cause a lot of damage. We will repair your home, but we are not responsible for damage to decoration, furniture, carpets or other belongings.

KEEP COSY IN YOUR HOME OVER WINTER

Set your temperature : 21°C - Daytime & 15-18°C - Nighttime

Keep your home heated to at least 15°C and allow the heat to circulate all rooms.

Remember to keep your home well ventilated. Open your windows wide for just 5 minutes a day. This will allow enough fresh air into your home for the day. Draw your curtains in the evening and keep doors closed to block out draughts.

If you are going to be away from home then, leave your heating to come on at least once a day for a couple of hours. If you have air source heating press the suitcase button on your controller or turn down the temperature if you have another controller. Those with infrared heating should turn down the temperature on their controller.

Find out where your main stopcock, tap or Surestop Switch (if fitted) is.

Report dripping taps or running overflows to us so we can repair them.

If you are going away from home for any length of time, during winter, ask us to drain your water supply. We will do this at no charge.



Eat at least one hot meal a day and have plenty of hot drinks

Keep active and wrap up warm if you go outside



If you are over 65, or have a long-term health condition, you can get a free flu jab from your GP to protect against seasonal flu strains

HHP Services at a Glance



NORMAL

(with COVID checks and measures in place where necessary, along with social distancing measures where required)

- Customer Services (phone & email)
- Allocations / Mutual Exchanges
- Estate Management & Inspection
- Termination of Tenancy Inspections
- Information Request Responses

- Invoice Payment Processing
- Rent Advice
- Complaints
- Development Programme
- Garden Assistance & Grounds Maintenance

- Investment Works
- Repairs
- Applications
- Planned Maintenance



DISRUPTED

- Rent Payments (online / paypoint / phone still available)
- Tenant Participation



CLOSED

- Offices (Stornoway & Balivanich)

RENT CONSULTATION

We are currently consulting with tenants on the annual rent increase for 2022/23. Your rent pays for all the services you receive from HHP, including the 24 hour emergency repair Service, repairs appointments, investment in your home and tenancy support & advice.

You can access the consultation on our website at www.hebrideanhousing.co.uk or by contacting Customer Service on **0300 123 0773**.

Completed responses will be entered into a prize draw. There will be four prizes of £50 to be won which will be randomly drawn and allocated to the winner's rent account.

HHP CELEBRATES 15 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

On 12 September 2021 we celebrated our 15th Anniversary. We are marking this in a variety of ways including :



Awarding a voucher of £150 for any local shop to 15 tenants who had a clear rent account on 15 November 2021.



As a symbol of the importance of addressing climate change we have identified 15 locations for tree planting in a variety of locations across our islands



Donating a trophy to Castlebay Community School, Sgoil Lionacleit, Sir E Scott School and The Nicolson Institute

BE A RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNER

Dog fouling is becoming more of an issue in many of our schemes. It is the most offensive type of litter on our streets and it is consistently raised as a concern by tenants and residents. The Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003 states that it is an offence for any person in charge of a dog not to remove and dispose of any excrement, if the animal defecates in a public place. This includes pavements, footpaths, roads, verges, parks, communal areas and recreational spaces or your neighbour's front garden.

Be a responsible Dog owner and respect your neighbours and others. When walking your dog always take a poop scoop or bags with you. It is your duty as a dog owner to clean up after your dog and dispose of the waste properly. You can use any general waste public litter bin, not just designated dog waste bins. Also, never let your dog out alone. If you witness someone failing to clean up after their dog and you know the owner's details, please report them to your Housing Officer.

Officers at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Police Scotland have the authority to issue a Fixed Penalty fine of £80, rising to £100 if not paid within 28 days, to any dog owner that does not pick up and dispose of the excrement responsibly. Offenders may also be reported to the Procurator Fiscal and could be fined up to £500 if convicted.

Development Update

Written by
Sawan Morrison - Development Manager



Since August 2021, we have completed 6 homes at South Dell and 14 homes (8 for rent and 6 for sale) at Sinclair Avenue.

This brings the total homes finished this financial year to 58 affordable homes writes Development Manager Sawan Morrison.

Scheme	Area	Type	No of Homes
Cnoc A Charnain, Shawbost	Rural Lewis	Rent	4
Sinclair Avenue, Goathill	Stornoway	Rent	28
Sinclair Avenue, Goathill	Stornoway	NSSE	14
Lady Matheson Court	Stornoway	Rent	6
South Dell	Rural Lewis	Rent	6
Total Handover to October 2021			58

The former Lochmaddy Hospital site is being progressed by the Developer Macinnes Bros and we are partnering to build 8 homes for social rented. We are currently discussing the final agreements and awaiting planning permission and building warrants.

The first phase of Cleat Road in Barra has now had planning permission granted and is expected to commence on site in November 2021. There will be 6 homes for social rent at this phase.

To register your interest for rented houses, visit our website <https://www.hebrideanhousing.co.uk/> and refer to the page "Become a Tenant".



Sinclair Avenue

We are currently accepting applications for the shared equity homes at Sinclair Avenue. There are 6 houses for sale through the New Supply Shared Equity scheme. All of the NSSE properties are spacious 3 bedroom houses and the starting price for a 60% equity stake is £117,000. For those wishing to purchase a higher equity stake of 80%, the price increases to £156,000. The properties have been independently valued at £195,000.

Please contact sharedequity@hebrideanhousing.co.uk for an application pack.

Breasclete

There is currently one 2 bedroom (4 Person) shared equity home available for purchase at Sgeir Ghlais, Breasclete for a starting price of £72,000 (with 60% equity stake) up to a maximum of £96,00 (for an 80% equity stake). The property has been valued at £120,000.

Please contact christina@tighean.co.uk for an application pack to start your journey into home ownership.



Calmax is progressing on site at Balivanich now named Johnstone Court. There are 10 social rented homes expected to complete in February 2021.

McInnes Brothers are progressing on site at Ionad Mairi Bremner, Howmore to build 4 homes for social rent. The completion of this site is expected to be early December 2021.



Alex Murray Construction continues work on site at the former Police Station, Tarbert. There have been delays due to a number of factors and are now due to complete in December 2021.

Alex Murray Construction successfully completed 6 rented homes at Sealladh Beinn Dail, South Dell. (pictured left).

Calmax is progressing well at the 8 homes site at Barvas now named Gleann Mor which is due to complete in January 2022.



Staff Changes



Linda Johnson
Housing Officer (Uist)



Kenneth Mackay
Financial Accountant



Emma Macleod
People Development Officer



Katia Petteloot
Executive Office Manager



James Morrison
Finance Manager



Paul Nicoll
Finance Assistant



Nataliya Nedkova
Customer Services Supervisor



Carys Sinclair
Business Administration
Modern Apprentice

Investment Update

Written by
Peter O'Donnell - Property Services Manager



Once again it has been a difficult year for everyone as we still find ourselves working within COVID restrictions.

- Smoke and Heat Alarm installation are close to completion and on track to be completed by February 2022.
- Electrical checks have been carried out on a large number of properties. Any urgent issues identified are rectified there and then and non-urgent recommendations will be addresses as part of a future programme of works.
- A large number of Air Source Heat Pumps have been installed this year.

It is essential that we are allowed access to your home to carry out investment works so if you receive an appointment, please ensure you allow us access or call us on **0300 123 0773** to change to a more suitable date if needed.

The recent energy crisis has meant that, for now, there are limited options for switching supplier and you may be advised to stay with your current supplier until things settle down.

Advice is available through the following agencies :

- Tighean Innse Gall - 01851 706121
- Citrus Energy - 0800 221 8089
- Citizens Advice Bureau - 01851 705727



CLEAR RENT ACCOUNT

The first tenant selected at random who has a clear rent account on 01 January 2022 will receive a £100 voucher of their choice.

There will also be 2 runner-up prizes of £50!

AGM 2021 - THANK YOU TO OUR TENANTS

At our fifteenth, and second virtual, Annual General Meeting on Thursday 26 August 2021, Chief Executive, Dena Macleod thanked all our tenants for their patience during lockdown when our services were disrupted, the tenants who faithfully paid their rent and everyone who took part in our recent Tenant Satisfaction Survey.

Our Chair, Iain Macmillan welcomed all in attendance and thanked everyone for their contribution throughout the year. During the last year we completed 22 new homes for social rent, 4 Shared Equity homes and invested £2.54M on improvements in our tenants' homes.

Donald Macleod, Director of Finance & Corporate Services presented the Annual Report and Financial Statements to 31 March 2021 and confirmed that our Auditors, CIB Services, were satisfied they were prepared in accordance with UK accounting and housing standards. CIB Services were appointed External Auditor until the next AGM.

The Chair closed the meeting by giving thanks to Alasdair Mackenzie, long serving Tenant Board Member, who retired earlier this year.

Following the AGM our Board Members are as follows :

- Tenant : Alex Gardner
- Board Appointed : Helen Mackenzie
- Community : Calum Mackay
- Community : Fiona Macleod
- Community : Iain Macmillan
- Community : Roddy Nicolson
- Council : John Macleod
- Council : Norman Macdonald
- Council : Roddy Mackay
- Co-opted : Gordon Macleod

We currently have 3 tenant vacancies on our Board, if you feel you have the necessary skills please email : governance@hebrideanhousing.co.uk or call 0300 123 0773

