



hebridean housing
partnership

Homeward Spring 2025

Issue 34

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Customer Services : 0300 123 0773



Top (left to right) Tenant Engagement Officer, Laura, and Housing Officer, Fiona, with Neil and James from Cothrom at our tenant event at Balivanich Community Hall.

Right: Tenants deep in discussion at Balivanich Community Hall.



Tenant Engagement – Uist & Barra

Thank you to those of you who took time to fill out our Tenant Event Survey that was issued earlier this year.

Following your feedback, we hosted a tenant drop in event at Castlebay Community Hall on Monday 14 April. This central venue allowed us to catch up with our tenants over a tea or coffee and discuss topics that are important to you.

Once again, when planning for our tenant events, we followed your feedback which stated you would like to see events held in central and easily accessible locations. Our event at Balivanich Community Hall was held on Tuesday 15 April and provided tenants with the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and ideas with members of staff and partner organisations. Those in attendance were also provided with a lunch by HHP, courtesy of Macleans Bakery.

At our tenant event at Balivanich Community Hall, we were pleased to have had a number of partner organisations in attendance. The organisations in attendance were: Uist Citizens Advice Bureau, DWP, Tighean Innse Gall, Climate Hebrides, FES, CNES Financial Inclusion, NHS Health Promotion, Uist Volunteer Centre, Cothrom, WICCI and Community Energy Scotland.

Each organisation in attendance offered valuable advice and support throughout the event.

The event was a valuable opportunity for tenants to engage with local organisations and ask housing staff any questions they had. Thank you to those of you who attended the event.

If you have any feedback you would like to provide following the events, please email
Tenantengagement@hebrideanhousing.co.uk.

TPAS Conference (TPAS)

Every year we fund 5 spaces for tenants to attend the Annual TPAS Conference. This year, TPAS will be celebrating their 45th anniversary at a conference held at the Golden Jubilee Hotel, Clydebank, from Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd June.

The TPAS Conference provides the opportunity for you to hear from expert speakers, get involved in interactive workshops and speak to other tenants and staff from various Scottish Housing Associations.

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please get in touch at: tenantengagement@hebrideanhousing.co.uk for an informal discussion.



Climate Hebrides Training

You have said that you would like to see a focus on environmental topics at events. We have spoken to Climate Hebrides who will be hosting a free sustainability training course on 13 May 2025 in our HHP Stornoway office from 10am-4pm.

The training will cover the following topics:

- Energy
- Food & Diet
- Transport
- Nature Based Solutions
- Waste Reductions

A free lunch will be provided and at the end of the session you will receive a sustainability certificate.

HHP Charitable Donations 2024/25



Left to right: HHP Board Member, Gary, and Housing Officer, Fiona, presenting Jessie from Cobhair Bharraigh with the cheque.



Left to right: HHP Area Manager for Uist, Katie, presenting Heather from Share (South Uist & Eriskay) with the cheque.



Left to right: HHP Board Member, Gary, alongside Housing Officer, Fiona, presenting Eilidh Macleod Memorial Trust representative, Laura, with the cheque.

Since the release of our last Newsletter in December 2024, we were pleased to have had the opportunity to meet with three locally-based charities to present each of them with a cheque for the amount of £1000, as agreed at our 2024 AGM.

Cobhair Bharraigh, Share (South Uist & Eriskay) and Eilidh Macleod Memorial Trust were the final three charities to receive cheques from us within 2024/25, whilst we had previously presented representatives from Eilean Siar Foodbank, Advocacy Western Isles and Western Isles Kidney Patients Association with their cheques towards the end of last year, as was shown in the winter edition of Homeward.

The photographs to the left show representatives from Cobhair Bharraigh, Share (South Uist & Eriskay) and Eilidh Macleod Memorial Trust receiving their cheques from members of our staff.

Decoration Packages for Incoming Tenants



In partnership with FES FM, a void pack scheme has been introduced from 10 March 2025. As part of their community benefit, FES will provide incoming tenants with a pack to help with the expense of decorating.

The decorating packs include brushes, rollers, protective sheets and masking tape.

The pack will also include 5 LED light bulbs.

Each pack will be left in the property and we hope this helps new tenants moving into their new home.

Follow us on social media



We are active on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter/X. Follow us now to stay up to date on all of our upcoming events and any new developments.

Development Update

Written by
Sawan Morrison - Development Manager



Barra

Macinnes Bros continue their effort to get on site for the second phase at Rathad na Ceardaich, Barra. The contractor has submitted planning and building warrant applications and are expecting to be on site in Spring time. We will strive to minimise any disruption as we work to provide housing across our rural communities.

Uist

We are working to progress a site in Grimsay, Uist and are hoping to submit a planning application for 8 homes shortly. A planning application is needed before a resumption order can be lodged for the land.

Stornoway

Work is progressing well on the final phases of the site named An Allt Dubh at Blackwater by Calmax. We hope the new tenants from phase 1 have settled in well.



Lèana an t-Sruith, Leverburgh

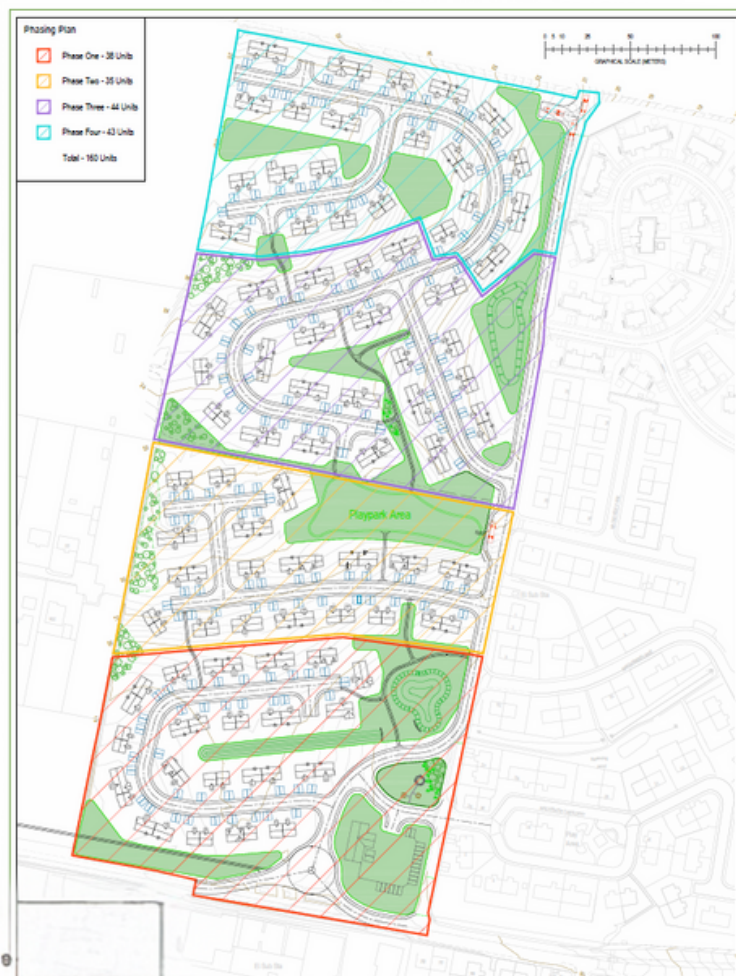
Harris

Alex Murray Construction continue work on 12 homes for rent in Leverburgh. The homes will be completed in 2 phases with the first phase to be completed in May 2025. Following a public consultation, this scheme was named Lèana an t-Sruith which translates to "meadow of the stream", the local name for the general area of the development.

We expect to submit a planning application for the site at Scott Road in the near future following the completion of a hydrology study.

Development Update

Written by
Sawan Morrison – Development Manager



Melbost West

As part of the masterplan process for Melbost West, we have conducted 2 public consultation events at Sandwich Hall.

The feedback was largely positive in support of further housing in Stornoway.

Some concerns were raised on services to support the development and we will work to address this.

This will be a phased development and the size and timescales of the phases will depend on funding and housing demand.

I have a gunnera in my garden, what should I do?



You must ensure you don't let it spread beyond the garden. If the plant is healthy and producing flowers, you must make sure that you reduce the risk of the dispersal of the seeds around late summer and autumn. If you have a Gunnera in your garden and would like to remove it, the best thing to do is cut it back completely and then dig it out and dispose them to an authorised landfill site.

Alternatively, Gunnera can be cut back completely, and the stump treated with herbicide, but this is unlikely to reach down into the more well-established rhizomes (roots). While these rhizomes can be near the surface, others may be up to a metre deep; that can make them difficult to excavate with simple gardening tools.

In addition to this, Gunnera tends to set up home in wet, boggy conditions which can make successful removal a lot more difficult if you don't have the right equipment.

Investment

Written by
Peter O'Donnell - Investment Manager



Alert for any tenants with Total Heating with Total Control

The Total Heating with Total Control (THTC) tariff, which is used on the majority of our storage heating systems, relies on a radio tele-switch to control the off-peak tariff. This radio wave technology is being phased out after June 2025 and this will result in the meter no longer working.

Once the tele-switch is no longer working, it could mean that tenants are left on the higher rate tariff for all their electricity.

Your supplier should be in contact with you to arrange a smart meter, so look out for a letter and please do not discard any post from them as it may contain information on what to do next.

We would also advise you to contact your supplier now and ask them for an update.

As you will need to move to another tariff, we would advise that you accept a smart meter to make this easier. The most suitable tariff to replace THTC is either E9 or E10 tariff. You will need to discuss this with your supplier, but help is available locally through Tighean Innse Gall on 01851 706121.



Drains Reminder

To avoid blocked drains, there are a few simple steps you can take. Firstly, be mindful of what you put down your drains. Avoid pouring grease, oil, and coffee grounds down the sink, as these can accumulate and cause blockages. Use a drain strainer to catch hair and other debris. Regularly clean your drain stoppers and traps to prevent buildup. Also, be cautious with flushable wipes and feminine hygiene products, as they can cause blockages in your toilet.

Never flush down
the toilet:

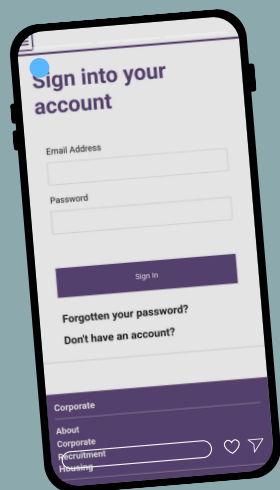
Never pour down
the sink:



If drains are blocked due to any of these items we reserve the right to charge for the cost of the clearance.



Tenant Portal



We're pleased to share that 578 tenants are now using our Tenant Portal. If you've not signed up yet, it's quick and easy to get started. Simply visit www.hebrideanhousing.co.uk/tenant-portal/ to:

- Manage your rent account
- Report repairs
- Access services at a time that suits you, on your preferred device
- Join the growing number of tenants enjoying the convenience of our portal today.

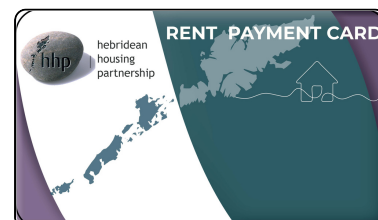


Other Ways To Pay Your Rent

- **Cash payment at your local HHP Office**
- **Allpay Payment Card - at any Post Office or Paypoint**

location

- **Allpay Phone Payment - 0844 557 8321**
- **Online payment - www.allpayments.net**
- **Direct Debit/Standing Order - forms on request**
- **Universal Credit/Housing Benefit**



Storing items on bathroom window sills

Storing items on your bathroom window sill can come with a risk.

Firstly, depending on how your window opens, these items could potentially restrict access to opening and closing your window, which we wouldn't recommend as it limits your ability to ventilate your home.

Secondly, if the window is open, a gust of wind could cause valuable items to blow over, causing damage to sanitary ware which could result in a recharge to the tenant.

Please carefully consider which items need to be stored on the sills to avoid an incidence of damage.



Ways to save on your Energy Bills

1. Showers/baths

Showers use significantly less hot water than baths do. Even spending one minute less in the shower will save you money.

2. Clever cooking

Cook with the lids on the pans, consider one pot dishes



3. Room thermostats

Should be set between 18c – 21c, slightly higher if there are elderly people or very young children turning your appliances off standby mode.



4. Close curtains in the evening

This helps keep the heat in and the cold out.

5. Arrange your furniture

Avoid having your furniture directly in front of radiators as this reduces the temperature in the room.

6. Switch off light

Turn off the lights in the rooms that are not in use.



7. Fill your washing machine

Wait until you have a full load before using your machine and try lowering the temperature to 30c for lightly soiled goods.



8. Switch of Standby

You can save around £65 per year by turning your appliances off standby mode.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms



Please remember that you have a responsibility to check your smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms to ensure they are working and **to keep you and your family safe.**

Press and hold the test button for 10 seconds to ensure that it sounds.

Check that any interconnected alarms also sound within this period.

GARDEN COMPETITION

Calling all green fingered tenants. Every year we hold our Hebridean Housing Gardening Competition to encourage you to show us the hard work you put into your garden. Many of you take great pride in your outdoor spaces and we feel it is important for this to be recognised.

This year there will be a prize for the following categories:

- Best Overall Garden
- Best Planter
- Best Use of Garden Space

The winner of each category will win a gardening hamper.

Please send your nominations to tenantengagement@hebrideanhousing.co.uk by Friday 27 June.



KATHERINE KING, 3 URAGHAG, WAS CROWNED THE WINNER OF THE BEST OVERALL GARDEN COMPETITION LAST YEAR. PICTURED ABOVE IS HER IMMACULATE GARDEN.



MARGARET CAMPBELL, 5 RUBHA DOIGHEAG, WAS THE WINNER OF OUR SUNFLOWER COMPETITION LAST YEAR. PICTURED IS HER DAUGHTER, MAIREAD MACINNES.



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Keeping gardens neat and tidy

With the growing season now here we would like to remind tenants of their responsibility to keep gardens neat and tidy. This includes ensuring that trees and hedges do not encroach on paths and pavements. Keeping gardens tidy makes the whole area look better. Please also keep the verge outside your fence line clear and remove any growth to avoid spread onto foot paths



Help to Claim can help you with your Universal Credit application

It's free, independent and confidential. Every year, our dedicated advisers help thousands of people get the help they're entitled to.

What we can help with

- ☒ Find out if you're eligible for payments
- ☒ Step-by-step support to complete your UC claim
- ☒ Prepare for your first JobCentre appointment
- ☒ Check your first payment is correct

www.cas.org.uk
0800 023 2581

 CitizensAdviceScotland

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Applying for Universal Credit

You can apply online, or in some special circumstances, over the phone or from home.

What you'll need

If you can, collect this information in advance. This will save you time and make it easier to apply.

Here is a checklist of what you will need to help start your application:

- ☐ Immigration status
- ☐ Housing costs
- ☐ Childcare situation
- ☐ Rental/Mortgage expenses
- ☐ Income and savings information
- ☐ Other benefits, if you get any
- ☐ Joint claimant details (if a joint claim)
- ☐ Bank account details

To find out more about applying for Universal Credit, visit our website at citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/benefits/universal-credit/

Get help applying for Universal Credit

Help to Claim is a dedicated service from Citizens Advice.

It's free, independent and confidential.

Call us for free: **0800 023 2581** (Scotland)
8am-6pm, Monday to Friday.

Chat to an adviser online at cas.org.uk/helpclaim
(available 8am-6pm, Monday to Friday)

Get in touch using our BSL service
cas.org.uk/british-sign-language-service-universal-credit

The Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux - Citizens Advice Scotland, Scottish charity SC016637



CHILDREN'S EASTER EGG COMPETITION

Can you find all of the hidden Easter eggs in this edition of the spring Homeward Newsletter?

SPRING
KIDS CORNER

Count how many Easter eggs you can find throughout the Newsletter and submit your answer by responding to the tenant engagement email address with the total number of eggs you found by Friday 30 May. The correct answer will win an Easter Prize.

