

# **Ferguslie Park** Newsletter of Ferguslie Park Housing Association Spring 2018

## WENEED Tenants of the Association

We have a place on the board of the Association and we'd love it if a tenant would volunteer to join us.

Ferguslie Park Housing Association was started by tenants 30 years ago to improve housing conditions in



Ferguslie Park. Tenants have been essential to running the Association ever since. We are a mix of local tenants, local residents, people who work here and some with other experience such as housing,

> community work and law. We're a good team and we'd welcome another tenant to make the team even stronger.

The Board has responsibility for all the big decisions and it employs the staff to give them advice and deliver the services

they require. If you'd like to be more involved in making your housing service better; pick up an info pack from the Housing Office, the Library or in the Tannahill Centre.

Meetings are monthly on a Wednesday from 5 to 7.30pm and you can expect to attend training, sometimes at the weekend. The yearly commitment works out at about 16 evenings plus up to 4 days.

For more information contact Teresa Sadler at the Association's office or email teresasadler@fpha.org.uk

We have a new we

Bathroom before...

Bathroom after...

# aintenance l

Our new maintenance contract has started, with the benefits of appointments being offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays evenings and on Saturday mornings.

A significant feature in this contract was the ability to merge the two information systems, and whilst there has been some initial hiccups at the start of this process, these have now been resolved. We have included improved performance indicators relative to the delivery of our repairs service and we are confident this will bring a much improved service for our customers.

The 5 year cycle of improvement works has started with the installation of new kitchens, bathrooms and boilers. These improvements were well received by our tenants, bringing modern facilities to their homes coupled with the installation of highly efficient boilers.

The improvement programme will continue, with more kitchens, bathrooms and boilers being installed, plus window and door replacements for specific properties where the individual components have reached replacement in line with our Business Plan. Our staff will contact tenants who's properties are identified within the investment programme in the coming financial year.





# Help our drains to flow clear

We are encountering serious problems with blocked drains in Ferguslie Park and ask that all tenants follow this advice from Scottish Water.

#### Did you know?

Every year there are approx. 37,000 blocked drains and sewers across Scotland, which can cause flooding which affects you and your neighbours and pollutes rivers, burns and coastal waters in your local area.

Around 80% of these blockages that clog up the cycle are caused by either inappropriate items being put down the toilet, or fat, oil and grease being put down the sink. We believe the best way to tackle blocked drains and sewer flooding is to work together with you to help prevent blockages that can clog up the cycle in the first place.

#### Oil doesn't make everything run smoothly

Fat, oil and grease in liquid form may not appear to be harmful as they don't get stuck in the plughole, but as they cool they congeal, harden and stick to the inside of drains and sewers, which can cause drains to block, flooding you and your neighbours.

#### Did you know?

All fats are equal. Whether it is saturated fat (like lard), mono-unsaturated fat (like olive oil) or vegetable oil - they all congeal and harden.

It is an offence under the Sewerage (Scotland) Act 1968 to dispose of fat, grease or oil down your sink.

# Your kitchen checklist:



**Fat, oil and grease** - leave to cool/harden in a container and then scrape into your food waste recycling or put them in the bin\*

**Give plates, pots, utensils and containers** a quick scrape or wipe with some kitchen towel before washing and use a sink strainer in the plughole to catch any bits of leftover food going down the sink.

Believe it or not **soup, stocks, sauces and milk products** all contain fat, which can also congeal and harden in your drains - leave these to cool/harden, scrape into a container and then scrape into your food waste recycling or put them in the bin\*.

**Peelings** - put any waste food and peelings into your food waste recycling or put them in the bin.

### Never flush down the toilet:



## Wipe out blocked drains

The waste water drain which runs from your house to the public sewer is usually about 4 inches wide, which is less than the diameter of a DVD.

Flushing things like wipes, nappies or cotton buds down the toilet can cause drains to block, flooding you and your neighbours.

It's easy in the bathroom – just follow our Three Ps rule and only flush pee, poo and toilet paper.

Everything else should go in the bin, not down your toilet - check out the bathroom checklist of 'never flush' items below:

- all wipes (baby, personal cleansing, toilet and household cleaning) - even if the pack says 'flushable'
- 2. sanitary items (sanitary towels, tampons, liners, applicators and backing strips;
- 3. cotton wool, cotton buds, disposable nappies and nappy liners
- 4. condoms, incontinence pads, colostomy bags, used bandages and contact lenses

#### For more information please visit

http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/you-and-your-home/ your-home/keep-the-water-cycle-running-smoothly

# We want to know what you think about Rent Arrears

Collecting all our rent so that we can provide the best service to our tenants is crucial for our business.

We know these are difficult times, especially for those of you who are managing zero hours contracts and welfare reform and that you need as much support as possible from the Association to keep on top of your rent payments and avoid rent arrears.

We are working on a new rent arrears policy and hope to have a draft approved by our Board in June. Once the Board is happy with the draft, we need to consult widely with tenants. We need to hear your opinions about how best to manage our arrears. For example what does a 'firm but fair' approach to collecting arrears mean to you? There is a balance to be achieved, where we support tenants as much as we can on one hand, while at the same time maximising our rent collection. We also need to be fair to the vast majority of our tenants who pay their rent on time and therefore ultimately, we have to evict tenants who don't pay despite our persistent attempts to help them. This is a last resort and always done only after every other option is exhausted.

If you would like to get involved in the consultation process then please join our interested tenant register by calling us on **0141 887 4053** or emailing us at **admin@fpha.org.uk** if you have not already joined.

## Ferguslie Park Community Council

Ferguslie Community Council would like to invite all residents to their next meeting on Thursday 28th June 2018 at 7pm. The venue will be announced on their Facebook page "Ferguslie Community Council".

# New General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

#### Ferguslie Park Housing Association Ltd is the Data Controller of the information we hold about our customers.

The current Data Protection Act 1998 regulates the way we handle and process your personal data. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a new, Europeanwide law that replaces the Data Protection Act 1998. The GDPR places greater obligations on how we handle your personal data and it aims to give you more rights and control over how your personal data is handled. The Act comes into effect on 25 May 2018.

# What information does the GDPR apply to?

Personal data is information which relates to a living person who can be identified from the information itself, or by linking it with other information. For example, it could be your name and address.

Processing personal data is the name given to anything that we do with your personal data that we hold. For example, entering your details into our computer systems or storing a completed form in a filing cabinet.

# How are we preparing for the new Act?

Over the coming months we will be reviewing what data we hold, how we store it, and what basis we have for processing it. In addition, we will be reviewing and updating our policies, procedures and privacy statement.

#### We need your help

We are committed to keeping your personal details accurate. You are required to let us know of any changes to the information that you give us to ensure that we are holding accurate and relevant data.

#### **Keeping you informed**

We will continue to provide information to our tenants on our obligations and their rights.

More information can be found on the Information Commissioners Office website at https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/ guide-to-thegeneral-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/

# Rent rise kept below inflation at 2.5%

#### A big thank you to all of you who took part in the rent rise consultation in January.

We consulted with 200 tenants, just over 25% of you. This is one of the best consultation rates for a Housing Association in Scotland this year. For the first time, we consulted on two different rent rises, giving you a choice of a rise of 2.5% or 3%. Of the 200

tenants who took part, 114 (57%) supported a 2.5% increase and 66 (33%) supported the higher increase of 3%, 11 of you (5.5%) rejected both options and 9 tenants (4.5%) were happy with either option.

You told us that you wanted rents to stay as low as possible. The main thing for you is that your rent remains affordable for you and your family. A 2.5% increase is a below inflation rise, following two years when the rise was inflation only. So our rent, compared to other Housing Associations, is reducing.

## Area Walkabout and Litter pick

The Association staff & partners will be going on an estate walkabout & litter pick on the morning of Wednesday 27 June. Tenants are welcome to join in. If you are interested please let us know by the 31 May.

A light breakfast will be provided beforehand and some refreshments after the hard work is done!