



ABRONHILL HOUSING ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Looking Ahead

We don't accept rent payments at our office.
Please continue to make payments
by phone **01236 457948** Or online **www.allpay.net**

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Options Appraisal

– page 02

Rent Consultation 23/24

– page 03

Summary Tenant Satisfaction Survey

– page 04

Dolly Parton Imagination Library

– page 04

Planned Maintenance – Programme for 2023

– page 05

Allocations Policy Review

– page 07

Scottish Housing Regulator – Engagement Plan

– page 08

AFTAR – what we offer for you?

– page 09

Our Performance

– page 011

Out of Hours Repairs

If you need to report an emergency during this time
please contact the following contractors:

All emergency repairs (non gas central heating
related)

RODGERS AND JOHNSTON
0800 999 2520

Gas central heating breakdown

GasSure (James Frew Ltd) 01294 468113.
Please contact our office on 01236 457948
during normal working hours to report any faults.

Gas escapes should be reported **IMMEDIATELY** TO 0800 111 999
Our answer machine also details the above numbers. Please keep them handy.





Changes at Abronhill HA

As you know, Stephen Macintyre is our current Director. Abronhill is a small Housing Association, so Stephen only works with us on a part time basis, the rest of the time he is Director of Hillhead Housing Association in Kirkintilloch.



The SHR are the independent regulator of Housing Associations and Council Housing in Scotland. Their statutory role is to safeguard and promote the interests of tenants, owners, homeless people and gypsy/travellers. They do this by every year monitoring a landlord performance.

Stephen will be taking early retirement next year, so Abronhill must follow the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator (The SHR) when a director leaves or retires.

The SHR expects an "options appraisal" to be carried out. This gives tenants and the committee of Abronhill the chance to review how they work, and whether there should be any changes to your services, how your rent money is spent and our priorities going forward.

Abronhill cannot do this alone, they need residents to give their views on how they are doing and where you think things could be better.

Abronhill have appointed an independent company HRC to help find out your views and what is important to you moving forward. There are a number of ways you can have your say and tell us what you think. By the clicking on the link and completing the survey you could win a £50 voucher.

<https://forms.office.com/e/fbe9Vbifc9>

You can also take part in a short and informal meeting around a number of initiatives including our options appraisal, our proposed new allocations policy or on the results of our recent Tenant Satisfaction Survey. There will coffee, tea and cakes for you.

**We are hosting 2 sessions
on Thursday 6 July at our Office
at 2pm and one at 6pm.**



Rent Consultation 2023/24

We received 107 responses to our recent consultation on rent levels for 2023/24. A big thank you to all tenants who responded. We entered the names of all tenants who replied into a prize draw for a £50 Shopping Voucher, this was won by a tenant in Elm Drive – congratulations!

The response rate was **42%** of all tenants which was significantly higher than in previous years.

A consultation document was sent to all tenants in the post, but we also sent an online link to those tenants where we hold an up-to-date mobile number or email address. We received 82 responses online and 25 responses via the paper document.

The consultation question and responses are noted in the table below;

I want Abronhill to maintain investment in homes and services at the planned rate by increasing rents by 7%	81	76.6%
I do not agree with the proposal to increase rents by 7%	26	24.3%

The consultation also asked for comments if tenants disagreed with the proposal. We received a wide range of comments, and all of these were passed to our Management Committee in full for them to be considered when the final decision was taken on this year's rent review.

As you may expect many comments were in relation to the effects of the increased cost of living on individual households.

The Management Committee deliberated long and hard over the results of the consultation and expressed concern and sympathy over the comments made by some tenants about their personal situation.

The Committee sought to understand the direct financial help being made available to mitigate the cost-of-living crisis as detailed above. Committee also noted that the UK Government has committed to uprating welfare benefits by 10.1% and the National Living Wage by 9.7% both from the start of April 2023. Based on this the Management Committee of the Association made the decision that rents would go up by 7% in this year. Whilst historically high it is still 4% lower than the level of inflation, but was the lowest increase we could apply without stopping all planned repairs.

The Association has been very aware of the impact of rising energy and food prices on tenants. We hear about it during interactions with tenants especially around rent payments. As this situation developed, the Association sought every opportunity to bid for external funding to help support the community. In this financial year, we have received £11,000 funding from the SFHA (Scottish Federation of Housing Associations) Social Housing Fuel Support Fund. This has allowed the Association to give financial support to tenants to help with the cost of essential items such as gas / electricity, and food for households most in need.

We will continue to seek funding opportunities to help support our tenants.

A big thank you again to all those tenants who took the time to talk to us, comment on Facebook or complete the consultation document either on paper or online.

Abronhill Housing Association gets a major boost to its approval rating from Tenants!

Earlier this year we revealed a fantastic set of results in our three-yearly tenant satisfaction survey that took place in January. Abronhill HA was given a huge vote of satisfaction from our tenants.

With 258 homes we are one of the smallest community run housing associations in Scotland, yet we managed to achieve very high scores across a number of key performance indicators.

A total of 95% of those questioned were satisfied with Abronhill's overall service – improving on its 2019 performance of 92%, despite the disruption caused by the pandemic and successive lockdowns.

- ✓ 96% were satisfied with the “customer contact experience” offered by Abronhill
- ✓ 96% said the Association was good at keeping tenants informed
- ✓ 95% were satisfied with the repairs service for their homes
- ✓ 91% were satisfied with being part of Abronhill's decision-making process
- ✓ 89% were satisfied with the quality of their home
- ✓ 88% were satisfied with the management of their neighbourhood
- ✓ 88% said they felt the rent they pay was “good value for money”



The survey was carried out by The Knowledge Partnership in December and January through a mix of face-to-face and telephone interviews with 152 households.

Abronhill Director Stephen Macintyre said: “These are a great set of results which reinforce just how much our tenants value a locally run housing service.

“Whilst there are one or two areas where we can still do better we look forward to engaging with our tenants to agree how we can improve further in these areas.”

“Overall this strong performance ranks us in the top 10 best performing housing associations in the country and that is something the staff and committee teams can be very proud of.”

Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Abronhill Housing Association parents with children aged from birth to five have the opportunity to apply to the library and receive a new, carefully selected book delivered to their home every month to read too, and enjoy with their children.

Tenants will begin to receive books 6-8 weeks after applying and will then continue to receive a book every month until their child's 5th birthday or until they are no longer our tenant.

Get in touch with us on 01236 457948 or email us at admin@abronhillha.org.uk



Major repairs



New front doors

The Association has recently completed the installation of 20 new energy efficient front entrance doors to our properties with this work being completed between February and May at a cost of around £45,000.

These works were completed by Sidey Solutions Ltd and our tenants have been delighted with the works completed.

Loft and Cavity Wall Insulation Works

The Association has employed BCA Insulation to carry out loft insulation top ups and cavity wall insulation work to 48 properties identified as requiring this work during a desktop exercise. BCA Insulation have carried out surveys to the majority of properties and are in the process of carrying out works identified as being required during the surveys. The expected cost of this contract is around £45,000.



Major works 23/24

The Association plans on carrying out the following work:

- 25 new front entrance doors
- 20 properties to have new PVC-U double glazed windows fitted
- 11 properties to have a new kitchen fitted
- 10 properties to have new gas boilers fitted to replace the existing Thermaflow Electric Boiler.

We still have 8 homes where the tenants need to make arrangements to have new meters fitted before we can instruct the works to replace the boilers. If you need further advice and support on how to go about this please contact the office and we can help you.

The above improvements are due to commence from September. We will be however be in contact with tenants in advance of this.

We have completed the procurement process for the Front Doors and Double Glazing Contracts and are pleased to announce that Sidey have been appointed to carry out these major improvement works. Both contracts will start in September/October 2023. Our Maintenance Team will be in contact those tenants affected in advance to arrange for pre start survey.





Reporting Repairs

*If you require to report a repair, you are able to do this by telephoning the office on **01236 457948** or by visiting our office during our Opening Hours. Or you can email us admin@abronhillha.org.uk (non emergency repairs only)*

Outwith office hours and during public holidays repairs emergency repairs only should be reported the following numbers:

RODGERS & JOHNSTON
0800 999 2520

JAMES FREW (Gas Sure)
01294 468113 (for gas heating repairs)

Gas escapes should be reported immediately to Transco on 0800 111 999

Please note that **ONLY** emergency repairs should be called out of hours, any abuse of this service may result in you being recharged. If your repair is not an emergency please contact the

office during office hours. The timescale for carrying out repairs is as follows:
Emergency - 6 hours
Urgent - 3 days
Routine - 10 days



NEW STAFF MEMBER Joins the Abronhill team

We would like to introduce you to Aliya Brear who joins us for six months supporting our small Maintenance and Admin team.

Aliya started with us on 17 June and will be in post for the remainder of the year.

Allocations Policy Review

Abronhill Housing Association lets its houses based on “housing need”. So for example if you are homeless, or have been asked to leave your private tenancy, you would be eligible to apply to the Association for a tenancy.

In other cases you may already have a tenancy but are overcrowded or have a medical need that would be solved if you were to find a more suitable home.

Our allocations policy is being reviewed and below is a summary of the changes that are proposed:-

<p>Access: Where an applicant has access for less than 50% of week e.g. at weekends, should they be given one extra bedroom regardless of the number of children?</p>	<p>Medical Needs: Award of medical points restricted where an applicant already has an award of support points.</p>
<p>Single Persons: Should single person applicants be eligible for both 1 bed and 2 bed properties?</p>	<p>Where medical points are awarded for mobility reason applicants would only be eligible for ground floor accommodation.</p>
<p>Under Occupancy: Eligible under occupying points to be restricted to applicants who are socialising tenants.</p>	<p>Relationship Breakdown If an applicant is in a relationship breakdown should they receive a separate category of points on top of sharing points?</p>
<p>Housing Quality – where an applicant’s home has been assessed as below tolerable standard or has been designated part of a housing regeneration project (e.g. a demolition scheme) then points will be awarded.</p>	<p>Education Needs Should there be a restriction on eligibility for points where an applicant needs to move to Abronhill in order to be able to place a child who they care for in an Abronhill school for exceptional educational needs that can only be offered by schools in Abronhill?</p>

We are holding 2 workshops on Thursday 6 July at 2PM and 6PM in the Association’s office and we are keen to hear your views.



SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR ENGAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2023/24

All registered social landlords are regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and each year every landlord is presented with an Engagement Plan. As with previous years we are assessed as being “Compliant” with the Regulatory standards of Governance & Financial Management.

However, as a large proportion of our homes don't yet meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard SHR has asked that we provide it with regular updates on how we propose to tackle this issue.

This is one of the issues facing the Association that is being considered as part of our ongoing Options Appraisal mentioned on Page 2 of this newsletter.



The image shows a document titled "Engagement plan" for "Abronhill Housing Association Ltd" from the "Scottish Housing Regulator". The document is dated "Last Updated 31 March 2023". It details the regulatory status as "Compliant" and outlines the reasons for engagement, specifically regarding stock quality. It lists what Abronhill must do, what the regulator will do, and the regulatory returns required. The lead officer is identified as Lynn Stewart, Regulation Manager.

Engagement plan

Scottish Housing Regulator

Abronhill Housing Association Ltd

Regulatory Status
Compliant
The RSL meets regulatory requirements, including the Standards of Governance and Financial Management.

Why we are engaging with Abronhill Housing Association Ltd (Abronhill)
We are engaging with Abronhill about its **stock quality**.

Abronhill has one of the poorest compliance levels with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. We are engaging with Abronhill over its planned maintenance schedules and energy efficiency plans to bring all its stock up to the required standards.

What Abronhill must do
Abronhill must:

- provide us with its plans to bring its stock up to SHQS levels; and
- give us quarterly reports on its progress in implementing its plans.

What we will do
We will:

- review Abronhill's stock quality improvement plans;
- monitor its progress in implementing its plans; and
- update our published engagement plan in the light of any material change to our planned engagement with Abronhill.

Regulatory returns
Abronhill must provide us with the following annual regulatory returns and alert us to notifiable events as appropriate:

- Annual Assurance Statement;
- audited financial statements and external auditor's management letter;
- loan portfolio return;
- five year financial projections; and
- Annual Return on the Charter.

It should also notify us of any material changes to its Annual Assurance Statement, and any tenant and resident safety matter which has been reported to or is being investigated by the Health and Safety Executive or reports from regulatory or statutory authorities or insurance providers, relating to safety concerns.

Our lead officer for Abronhill Housing Association Ltd is:

Name: Lynn Stewart, Regulation Manager

Last Updated 31 March 2023

Scottish Housing Regulator

HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE

As your landlord, Abronhill Housing Association insures your property/building, however it does not insure any of your contents. This includes things like your furniture, personal belongings or decoration. If any of these are destroyed or damaged in a fire, burst pipes or by accident you will need to pay them to be replaced if you have no contents insurance.

It is important that you take out your own Home Contents Insurance to protect your belongings and replace them if need be. It not only covers your household goods but it can cover things like replacing keys if they are lost or stolen.

If you would like a leaflet sent out or you would like more information regarding contents insurance, please contact the office. Or you can call Thistle Insurance direct on 0345 450 7286 or visit www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk where you can request someone to call you back!





AFTAR

What we offer you?

The Association has committed funding to ensure our tenants can access welfare rights advice along with advice on debt, energy bills and support with digital and computer skills.

During the last year AFTAR assisted our tenants in a wide range of ways and ensured additional financial gains for many households. The Project assisted 95 tenants with 195 issues. Additional client financial gain amounted to £74,922.82 and the value of rescheduled debts amounted to £10,726.54.

Digital Inclusion, IT, Employability and Online Benefits

The project assisted 46 clients in this area.



Energy Advice

AFTAR also offers support for tenants with Energy advice, help and support. During the year 25 tenants were assisted with 48 issues. Over £2,300 of client financial gains resulted with £2,368 of energy debt cleared with help of Scottish Government grants.



Contact
John: 07948 702231
01698 265349



Motherwell & Wishaw
Citizens Advice
Bureau

Digital/Computer Help

Help available with

- Claiming Universal Credit
- Keeping Job Centre commitments
- CV Help
- Job searching & job applications online
- West College Scotland Distance Learning

Help available with

- Computer sessions/courses available
- 3 days a week
- All ages and levels welcome
- CSCS Health & Safety Courses
- FREE



Performance

How well we are doing?

The table below let you see how we are performing against some key activities during the period to 31 March 2023 and a comparison with the previous 2 years.

Remember, we always want to hear from you, whether it is good or bad. We can only improve our service if we hear from you. The green boxes highlight where our performance is strong whilst the red boxes highlight where performance is falling short of our targets.



Key Housing Management & Maintenance Performance Statistics

	2021	2022	2023	Target for 2023
Emergency Repairs Response	3.41 hrs	2hrs	1.72hrs	6 hrs
Non-Emergency Repairs Response	6.8 days	3.3 days	4.1 days	10 days
Repairs carried out Right First Time	89.98%	94.05%	91.38%	93%
*Stock meeting SHQS	N/A	31.1%	43%	50%
Time Taken to Let Empty Homes	89.3 days	73.2 days	78.8 days	15 days
Rent Lost due to Empty Homes	2.5%	1.12%	1.92%	1%
Gross Rent Arrears	5.7%	5.2%	3.4%	5%
Rent Collected as a % of rent due	96.4%	99.8%	101.5%	100%

*The Association's pepper potted stock type makes it problematic in meeting the SHQS target & SHQS now includes EICR checks. A number of flats are in blocks with no controlled entry systems which lowers the figure recorded for meeting the standard.

Helping Abronhill

Keeping in touch

Our staff can still be easily contacted via telephoning them direct 9.00AM and 5.00PM Monday to Friday on the usual number 01236 457948.

Or you can pop into our office Mondays to Thursdays between 9.00AM and 5.00PM and Friday 9.00AM and 4.00PM. We close for lunch between 1.00PM and 2.00PM.

Please do not hesitate to pick up the phone if there is anything you wish to talk to us about.



Public Holidays

Our office will be closed on the following dates:

Friday 14 July

Monday 17 July

At our Strategy Day in March 2023, our Management Committee reviewed the Association's Vision and Values.



MISSION

Our Mission

We aim to provide good quality affordable housing for people who want to live in Abronhill by giving a high quality housing service controlled by local people.



VISION

Our Vision

We will be the landlord of choice in our neighbourhood, working with our customers, communities and local stakeholders to create an environment where people choose and are happy to live. Excellent service and value for money will be at our core and we will strive relentlessly to balance both for our tenants.



VALUES

Our Values

Our values are shape how we do business to achieve our mission and the strategic objectives set out in our Business Plan. They underpin all the work that we do:

- ✓ **Excellence** – we provide a quality, customer focused service that demonstrates value for money
- ✓ **Accountability** - Our Committee and Management Team provide strong strategic leadership and oversight, ensuring tenants' interests are protected
- ✓ **Partnership Working** - We work collaboratively with our local community and seek out new ways to address issues that impact our residents.

Equal Opportunities Statement

This statement is the basis on which we build and provide all our services. It helps us make sure we try to meet the needs of those from all walks of life, and show respect, fairness and understanding in everything we do.

In practice, it means as a landlord and service provider we try to treat everyone fairly regardless of their personal characteristics - including for example, their age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief; or their marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, or pregnancy and maternity status.

We also firmly oppose all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. We do this not only because of our legal responsibilities, but because it is a vital part of who we are and what we are trying to achieve as an organisation. It also helps us become better at what we do.

As part of this commitment we will be contacting tenants and applicants with a request to complete and return a survey form which shall be anonymous. This will enable the Association to ensure that no one group or individual is being discriminated against.

Useful Numbers

Below are some useful numbers which may be of use:

Police Scotland	-	101	Scottish Water	-	0845 601 8855
Crimestoppers	-	0800 555 111	Council Tax &	-	01698 403 210
Citizens Advice	-	01236 723 201	Housing Benefit		
Benefits Agency	-	0345 604 3719	North Line	-	01698 403 110

Call North Line for all your bulk uplifts, pest control, abandoned vehicles, road and lighting, graffiti removal, Animal Welfare Officer and Environmental Protection Officer.

If you can think of any numbers that would be useful to list in this section, please let us know.



Get in touch

Tel: 01236 457948 | Email: admin@abronhillha.org.uk | Web: www.abronhillha.org.uk

Registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefits Societies Act 2014 (No 2443 R(S)
and with Scottish Housing Regulator (No HCB 275 AL)
Abronhill Housing Association is a registered Scottish Charity (Number SC033116)
Tax Reference CR533055