

larkfield news

creating a better neighbourhood



£0.4 million investment 2020/21 to Larkfield Homes



Welcome to the autumn edition of Larkfield News. Inside, you will find an update on our services, planned maintenance programme and customer feedback, as well as information on bogus callers, Care & Repair Service Inverclyde and Home Energy Scotland.

As we go through the autumn and winter seasons, we hope you and your loved ones continue to keep well and safe during the current pandemic.

The Committee & Staff at Larkfield HA

Our management committee recently agreed a revised investment programme for this year, taking account of ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and safety measures for contractors, tenants and staff. This year will focus on compliance safety works within the home and external works to the properties.

- External energy improvements works – unimproved Athol Steel flats (1 block)
- External decoration works (Phase 1) – Chester Road, Cumberland Road, Durham Road, Nairn Road, Westmorland Road and York Road
- External decoration works (Phase 2) – Auchmead Road, Cambridge Road, Devon Road, Dorset Road, Essex Road, Lincoln Road, Oxford Road, Pembroke Road, Suffolk Road and Warwick Road.
- Internal fire detection upgrades – all properties
- External lighting – all properties (that have not been improved within the last 12 months)
- External roughcasting improvement works - Banff Road flats
- Energy efficiency works to meet new energy standard - 25 planned upgrades for replacement gas central heating systems across stock

Further details of the planned improvement works will be issued to tenants affected in the next few months.

LARKFIELD'S AGM MARKS ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR

Due to current Covid-19 restrictions, we did our AGM a little differently this year, with nineteen Larkfield Housing Association members participating in the event virtually.

The Chairperson's report was followed by approval of the annual accounts, appointment of Committee members and the appointment of auditors.

Suzanne Harris, vice chair, reported another strong performance for the year, highlighting some of our wider activities carried out with tenants, partner organisations and other key stakeholders within the community.

She thanked our staff team and association members who organised this year's AGM in such unique circumstances and were able to obtain the necessary approvals carried out. Suzanne also thanked Dennis Flannery, who retired this year, for all his hard work on the Larkfield Committee.

Congratulations to this year's AGM prize winners who all received a £25 Tesco Voucher – Margaret Conway, Marion Jones, Pearl McLaughlin, Sandra Schiebel and John Scott.

Beat the chill this winter with support from Home Energy Scotland

If you're worried about your bills, or finding it difficult to keep warm at home, Home Energy Scotland can help you access support to improve things.

Home Energy Scotland is an energy advice service funded by the Scottish Government that provides free, impartial advice to help people stay in control of energy use and save money on their bills. The service has no affiliation with energy suppliers and the team never cold calls.

It can help in a range of ways including:

- Making sure you are getting the best energy deal
- Support for households with prepayment meters who are worried about topping up
- Advisors can check eligibility for discounts from energy suppliers such as the Warm Home Discount Scheme under which you could get £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2020 to 2021.

If you, or someone you know, is worried about energy bills, call **0808 808 2282** or email **adviceteam@sc.homeenergyscotland.org** and a friendly advisor will be in touch. Calls are free and lines are open Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm, and Saturday from 9am to 5pm.

Win £500 towards your energy bills

How good is your energy saving knowledge? Take Home Energy Scotland's quiz to find out:
<http://bit.ly/energy-bills-quiz>

You'll pick up tips to help you save energy and money at home –and if you leave your details, you'll be in with the chance of winning £500 towards your energy bills!

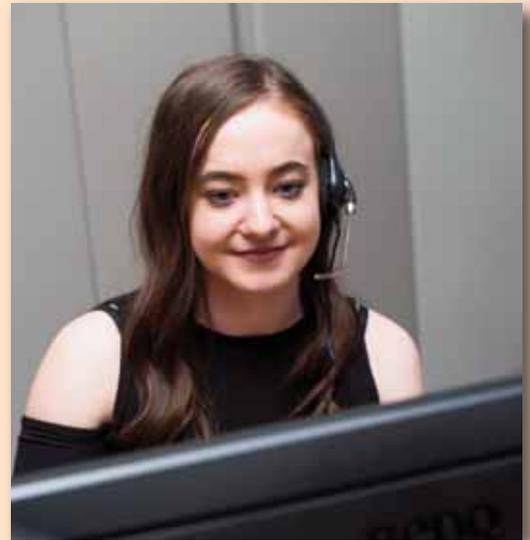


HOW OUR SERVICES ARE AFFECTED BY COVID-19

We all need to continue to work together to minimise risk, and act in line with the current advice from the Scottish Government and National Health Service.

As we write this newsletter, Inverclyde is operating within the rules of Tier 3 of the Scottish Government's new 5 Tier System. In line with the guidance for operating within Tier 3, our office remains closed to the public until further notice.

We continue to provide a remote service with our telephones being redirected to staff mobiles. If you have a general enquiry, please continue to phone us on **01475 630 930**. Please be aware, staff working remotely may make contact during this time using mobile numbers you may not recognise.



Essential home visits can still be carried out and a risk assessment process is in place to assess the potential risk for tenants, contractors and staff prior to any visit taking place. We will also ask questions to ensure no one in your household is showing Covid-19 symptoms on the day of your planned visit. Any personal information will be handled in line with GDPR.

Paying your rent

You can make payments over the phone, by using the customer portal, Direct Debit or Paypoint (if your local shop is open). We are happy to give advice on all possible methods of payment.

The MyLarkfield app is an easy way to access our services, pay your rent, make a complaint, update your details, report a repair or send us an enquiry.

Gas servicing

Your annual gas service is essential in ensuring all our homes with gas heating appliances are checked on a yearly basis to ensure they are operating safely. Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are also checked during this service.

Our contractor, James Frew (Gas Sure), has resumed this part of its operations and if your service is due, you will be contacted to arrange an appointment.

You will be asked about your personal circumstances in relation to Covid-19 to assess if the service can be carried out safely. Please contact the service contractor, James Frew (Gas Sure) to allow access for this important safety check when they contact you, or arrange an alternative appointment if it is not suitable.

Repairs

Our full repairs service is back up and running. However, you may still experience a delay with some routine repairs for some trades as we deal with the backlog from when our routine repairs were suspended during the original lockdown period.

VALUING YOUR FEEDBACK

PERFORMANCE UPDATE 2020

This is our performance report for the six-month period from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020. The report shows how we are performing in meeting our timescales, delivering satisfactory outcomes, lessons learnt and implementing changes to improve our services.

From 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020, we recorded one compliment and eight complaints.

Stage 1 – Frontline complaints

Complaints by service

COMPLAINT REASON	No. of complaints
Reactive repairs services	4
Landscape maintenance contract	4
Total	8

Compliments by service

COMPLIMENT REASON	No. of compliments
Tenancy Management	1
Total	1

Eight complaints were dealt with through Stage 1 of our complaints process. We responded to all complaints (100%) within our target timescale (four working days). Our average time (in working days) to respond was 1.7 days. Three complaints (37.5%) were upheld (i.e. found to be justified).

Stage 2 complaints

Complaints by service

COMPLAINT REASON	No. of complaints
Reactive repairs service / policy	1
Total	1

We received one second stage complaint during this period and responded to this within our required timescale of 20 working days.

If a complaint is upheld, we will look to implement changes to improve our future customer service.

Learning lessons and what we are doing to improve our customer service:

- Increased monitoring and engagement with our reactive repair contractors to ensure initial complaints are dealt with quickly by an on-site supervisor.
- Increased monitoring and engagement with our new landscape maintenance contractor to ensure initial complaints are dealt with quickly by an on-site supervisor.



Welcome to our new members!

Following the AGM, our office bearers for the coming year were appointed:

Sheralee Miller – chairperson
Suzanne Harris – vice chair
Aileen Hunter – secretary

Our Committee of Management were also delighted to welcome a new member onto the management committee, William Rice.

If in doubt, keep them out!

Bogus callers are people who try to trick their way into your home with the intention of stealing money or possessions.

These people often prey on those who are elderly or vulnerable. They may pretend to be council officials, workmen or police. Like Larkfield, most official companies will send you a letter or phone you before they call at your door.

If you are in any doubt about the person on your doorstep, please remember the following advice:

- Ask to see the caller's identity card and check it thoroughly. Our staff always wear ID badges
- Ask the caller to wait on the doorstep while you phone the company to check
- Check the identity of our Link Property staff or other appointed contractors by calling our office on **01475 630930**
- Lock the door while you phone and don't open it until you are totally convinced. Anyone who is genuine won't mind you doing this
- Ask them to return at an agreed day and time when you have someone with you
- Don't answer your door when it's dark outside
- If in doubt, keep them out
- Call the police on **101** if you are suspicious of anyone calling at your door.



Care & Repair Service Inverclyde

Did you know, as a Larkfield tenant, you may be entitled to benefit from Inverclyde Council's Small Repairs service?

The service provides practical help to residents in Inverclyde with small repairs and tasks around the home, including:

- joinery (doors and windows, kitchen units, flooring, shelving, furniture assembly etc.);
- plumbing (tap washers and inserts replacements, sink unblocking, minor leak repairs, re-sealing work);
- electrical (light bulb, plug, fuse, starter and socket replacements);
- security (door viewer, lock, bolt, CCTV and keysafe fittings); and
- general (hanging pictures, fitting toilet seats, hanging curtains and turning mattresses).

To receive the service, you must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- aged 60 or over;
- suffer from a long-term illness; and/or
- have a disability.

To book an appointment, or to find out more, please contact **0141 812 4111** or **enquiries.carerepair@bridgewaterha.org.uk**

Age Scotland

Friendship Line 0800 12 44 222

Words matter, give us comfort, wrap us in reassurance and help us stay connected.

Every year, thousands of people call Age Scotland, the national charity for older people. You can call about absolutely anything. With Age Scotland, you are not alone; they are there to listen, provide friendship and offer support.

Age Scotland's Friendship line is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.



My Kitchen at Branchton Community Centre

Branchton Community Centre is still running its 'My Kitchen' service, offering hot meals for delivery or collection. Meals are £3 each and you can order weekly.

If you'd like to subscribe, contact them on **01475 638 481** or leave a message on its Facebook page: **@BranchtonCC**

Wordsearch winners

The winners of our summer newsletters wordsearches were Mrs E Lewis and Mrs J McLaughlin, who each won a £25 Amazon voucher.



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Office opening hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9am – 4pm

Wednesday 9am – 12.30pm. Closed Wednesday afternoon

Larkfield Housing Association will produce this information on request in Braille, Audio Tape, Large Print and Community Languages. Larkfield Housing Association Limited is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, Registered Number: 2509 R(S), Registered Office: 14 Lothian Road, Greenock PA16 0PG. It is a Charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number: SC032418; a Registered Social Landlord with the Scottish Housing Regulator, Registration Number: HCB 293; and registered as a Property Factor Id: PF000279. Part of the Link group © Link Group Ltd 2020.