

**Rutherglen & Cambuslang Housing Association**

# NEWSLETTER



**Christmas 2021**



## ***Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year***

The Staff and Committee of Rutherglen and Cambuslang Housing Association would like to wish our tenants and customers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in 2022.

### ***Service over the festive period***

The Association offices will be closed over Christmas and New Year from Friday 24th December (from 1.00pm) until Thursday 6th January 2022. During these times if you have an emergency repair, please call the Freephone number listed to the right.

The Association would again like to ask that residents please take the time to look out for elderly or disabled neighbours living nearby who you may be concerned about to ensure they remain safe and well during the winter months particularly during periods of colder weather or periods of lockdown.

#### **EMERGENCY REPAIRS**

**FIRE, FLOOD,  
BREAK IN, GAS ESCAPE &  
POWER FAILURE**

**TELEPHONE:**  
**FREEPHONE 08001693379**  
**or 0141 647 4917**



## Christmas Tree Lights

➔ Be safe this Christmas and make sure that you get your tree lights checked out by a suitably qualified electrician. Most Christmas tree lights are packed and unpacked once a year and it is easy for people to think that because they are only used for a couple of weeks once a year that they must be safe. This is probably true but we recommend that you check first so as to ensure the safety of your home and family.



## Smoke alarms



➔ All Scottish homes need interlinked fire alarms by law before the end of February 2022.

New legislation, brought in following the Grenfell tragedy, means that Scotland will become the first UK nation to require every home to have interlinked fire alarms, which significantly reduce the risk of injury or death.

Your Home will have been fitted, or will be fitted, with at least two smoke alarms and one heat detector before the February deadline.

## Frost Alert

➔ This time of year has fallen upon us once again – and once again it is time for the Association to remind all tenants about the problems that the freezing temperatures of this country can bring. Frozen water supplies or burst pipes are all too common at this time of year but tenants following a few simple steps can avoid all of these Christmas disasters.

- Keep your house warm day and night
- Locate the stop valve in your house now, don't leave it too late (the Association will be happy to help if you require it)
- If you go away in the winter turn off the main stop valve and drain the system.(again contact the association if you need any help) If You Get a Burst Pipe
- Turn the water off at the stopcock
- Switch off electricity at the fuse box
- Switch off any water heaters
- Switch off central heating
- Open all taps to drain down your system
- Collect water in your bath for washing and w.c flushing
- Warn neighbours who may suffer damage
- Contact the Housing Association for further assistance



## Payment of Rent

➔ Tenants should continue to pay rent and abide by all other terms of their tenancy agreement to the best of their ability. The government has a strong package of financial support available to tenants, and where you can pay the rent as normal, you should do. Tenants who are unable to do so should speak to the Association at the earliest opportunity to avoid future complications with your tenancy.

All the existing options for paying rent will still be available. For tenants that use the post office, if this is closed or you cannot get out, you can call the office and make a secure payment over the phone. Tenants can also register on the Associations website and make a payment. If you are having any difficulties paying your rent please contact the office.

If you lose your job as a result of Coronavirus or you are having financial difficulties you can claim Universal Credit from the Department for Work and Pensions which includes support for housing costs, if eligible. The Government has introduced some temporary changes to make this easier. We would also urge you to apply for Statutory Sick Pay where you are eligible. Further information can be found at: [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)



## Covid-19 and Your Repair Service over the Festive Break



➔ Rutherglen & Cambuslang Housing Association have since April 2021 delivered a near full Repair Service to their Tenants and Owners. Obviously, we have been hampered with labour and material shortages due to the pandemic, but gradually we are returning to meeting our target repair times. Our tenants and owners have been very supportive and patient throughout this trying time and staff would like to express their appreciation to them and continued support.

At this time last year, the government intimated that there would be a relaxation of Covid restrictions, in order to unite families again over Christmas and New Year. Sadly, and at the final hour of restrictions being lifted we were plunged back into lockdown on Boxing Day.

**Lesson Learned! ...It Could happen Again!**

In the event of the advice from Government changing, in the lead up to or during the Festive Break this year, then our repair service cannot be guaranteed. Emergency Repairs Only will be carried out subject to government advice.

Hopefully this will not be the case, but it would be advisable for all householders to make provision for their homes by making sure that they have torches, bottled water, spare heaters and be aware of stopcock locations in the event of floods.





## Student Placement

→ This year Rutherglen & Cambuslang Housing Association have taken on the services of a 3rd year Building Surveying student from Caledonian University. As part of the curriculum building surveying students must complete a six-month placement with an employer, as part of their course.

Cameron Leonard is a third year Building Surveying student at Glasgow Caledonian University. Between June and December 2021, he will be on placement with the Housing Association. Universities encourage third year students to undertake a professional placement to gain vital work experience in a practical environment, that will serve them well in their future careers. This experience will be particularly beneficial for students in a year which was limited to home learning due to the pandemic.

His experiences so far have seen him working on his own initiative carrying out varying duties in Asbestos Surveys and Common Close Dilapidation Surveys. The quality of the work that he has returned has been of the highest quality. We had no hesitation in recommending him for his successful application for 'Camp America' later next year.

All the staff and Committee at Rutherglen & Cambuslang Housing Association wish Cameron all the success for the future.

## Fire Safety Reminder

→ We have enclosed a Fire Safety reminder produced by Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Service specifically for residents living in accommodation with a common stair. We would ask all residents to abide by this guide to ensure common areas are safe for all residents in the event of a fire. For individual advice on Fire Safety

relating to your home you can contact the Fire Service direct on the number below. If you need any further general advice or assistance from the Association relating to this issue, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

### The common stair is your only means of escape in the event of a fire.



Have you ever thought what you would do if fire were to break out in your stair? It may not necessarily be in your flat! A fire started in a common stair could kill you and your family. Even a small bag of rubbish can create enough smoke to fill a whole stair. Items left in a common stair are often deliberately set on fire.

### Keep it clear

- Get rubbish, old furniture, etc out of the building
- Make sure storage areas are kept locked
- For advice on uplifting items contact your local Council

### If fire does start

- Keep doors closed to prevent smoke filling your house
- Dial 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service, giving as much information as you can



For free home fire safety advice  
**CALL 0800 0731 999**  
or visit our website at  
**[www.firescotland.gov.uk](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk)**



**SCOTTISH**  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE  
Working together for a safer Scotland

## Attention!

### *There are new laws in Scotland for smoke alarms for Owner Occupiers.*

➔ "All Scottish homes need interlinked fire alarms by February 2022." New legislation, brought in following the Grenfell tragedy, means that Scotland will become the first UK nation to require every home to have interlinked fire alarms, which significantly reduce the risk of injury or death.

Owner Occupiers will from February 2022 have to have their Fire Safety Compliant. Homes will need to have one smoke alarm in the most frequently used room, one in every circulation space on each storey, and a heat alarm in each kitchen. Alarms should be ceiling mounted and interlinked.

Further advice can be given should any owner call the Association's offices. Owners should be aware that failure to have their smoke alarms fitted by February 2022 may negate their Building Insurance Cover in the event of a house fire.

The majority of R&CHA stock have been upgraded to meet these requirements with the remainder of our stock being upgraded by the end of January. If you haven't had the upgrade or received a letter from ourselves asking for suitable access date please contact R&CHA asap.



## *Annual Rent Review*

➔ The Association will soon be looking at its budget for the forthcoming year and part of this process involves looking at what income we require to manage and maintain our properties. Rents are the only source of our income and each year we set a budget based on our projected expenditure to ensure that we can manage our properties effectively. We must ensure that we are generating enough income to meet this budget.

As tenants you will be aware we are a Registered Social Landlord and a non-profit making organisation. Any surpluses that are made each year are set aside to re-invest in our properties to ensure that they continue to meet modern standards and will provide good quality housing for years to come.

The Management Committee of the Association continue to be very conscious of the pressure on household budgets as a result of current economic uncertainty and other costs of inflation etc. We always try to keep any increase on our rents to an absolute minimum and over the last few years we have managed to keep any increases in line with inflation and this year we are aiming to do the same. We will be writing to tenants early in the new year outlining our rent review proposals for next year and will welcome tenants' feedback on this.

## Advice for those worried about energy bills and energy related debt

➔ If you're worried about increasing energy bills or falling into debt as a result of energy price increases, you're not alone. Many households across the country are experiencing the same problem and it is understandably leading to concern and confusion. There are however some things you can do at home to help reduce your bills, and organisations that can offer you help and advice.



### What is causing the price increases?

➔ The wholesale price of gas has risen by approximately 250% since January 2021. This is partly because of a large increase in demand caused by a very cold winter and also because restrictions relating to the COVID-19 are lessening around the world, meaning everybody is using more energy now than they have over the past couple of years. This isn't just people at home, but also industries and companies playing catch up.

### What are the consequences of this?

➔ As a result of the wholesale gas price increase, a number of energy providers in the UK have ceased trading. Many of these could not afford to offer the services to their customers without passing on the significant increase in bills, which they aren't allowed to do.

The situation has however led to the UK Government and Ofgem (the energy regulator) increasing the Energy Price Cap that's designed to protect households from increasing energy bills. Ofgem have stated that a further increase on the Cap is expected in Spring 2022 and households should prepare for at least a 50% increase on their energy costs compared with the last few years.

### What should I do?

➔ Up until now, the advice has always been to switch your energy supplier if you aren't happy with how much you pay for gas or electricity. The advice has changed recently however because there are no 'deals' or 'new customer incentives' available from energy companies due to the increased wholesale gas prices. As such, customers are being advised to stay with their current supplier until the market responds to these price increases. If your energy supplier ceases trading or is placed into special administration by Ofgem, you will also be advised to do nothing until a new supplier is assigned to manage your account. In some cases, this may be Ofgem itself.

### To keep energy costs down at home, there are a range of things you can do, including:

- The room thermostat on the central heating should be set at 21°C (70°F) for the living room. Do not waste energy by opening windows - turn down the room thermostat or individual radiator controls instead.
- Heavy curtains at the windows will help to keep the heat in and closing them as soon as it starts to go dark also helps. But make sure the curtains are tucked behind any radiators at the windows.
- Use 'low energy light bulbs' as they use around 75-80% less energy than incandescent bulbs and last for approximately 8,000 hours. LED bulbs are more expensive to buy but use 90% less energy than incandescent bulbs and can last up to 50,000 hours.
- Do not leave appliances on standby. Switch them off at the wall instead when not in use.
- Wait until you have a full load before using your washing machine or choose the economy or half-load setting if possible. Always choose the shortest cycle that's practical for your needs.
- Always choose the correct sized saucepan for the amount of food you are cooking. Putting lids on pots will also help to reduce cooking time and therefore save energy.

## Packaging bulk refuse removal, household waste

➔ There has been an increase in fly tipping in recent times which is causing concern to the Association and households alike.

Not only is this unsightly but can risk an increase in vermin occurring and is also a fire hazard.

Can we also remind residents to use their household waste bins in accordance with the guidelines from South Lanarkshire Council as if used incorrectly the council will not empty the bins.

At this time of year, we can see an increase in packaging and discarded household items during the festive period. Could we again ask for everyone's co-operation to ensure that the removal of these additional refuse items is properly organised.

The Cleansing Department operate a Bulk Uplift service with your first standard bulk uplift request in the year being free of charge and they can be contacted on **0303 123 1020** to arrange removal.

This should help ensure at the start of the New Year our communities are kept clear of unsightly packaging/bulk items and any resulting problems.



## Support, Help and Advice

For help, advice and support on all things financial please contact the South Lanarkshire Council's **Money Matters Advice Service** at:  
[moneymattersadvice@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:moneymattersadvice@southlanarkshire.gov.uk) or 03031231003

or any of the following **Citizen Advice Bureaus** at:

Clydesdale – [www.clydesdalecab.org.uk](http://www.clydesdalecab.org.uk) or 01555664301

Hamilton – [advice@hamiltoncab.casonline.org.uk](mailto:advice@hamiltoncab.casonline.org.uk) or 01698283477

Rutherglen and Cambuslang – [bureau@rutherglancab.casonline.org.uk](mailto:bureau@rutherglancab.casonline.org.uk) or 01416463191

East Kilbride – [administration@eastkilbridecab.casonline.org.uk](mailto:administration@eastkilbridecab.casonline.org.uk) or 01355263698

Alternatively for free independent energy advice and support, you can also contact **Home Energy Scotland** – [www.homeenergyscotland.org](http://www.homeenergyscotland.org) or 08088082282



# Christmas Word Search



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 SANTA

MERRY  
 MISTLETOE  
 CHIMNEY  
 REINDEER



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