

Westworld

Official Newsletter of West of Scotland Housing Association

November 2022 Edition

Barrowfield in Bloom



A group of tenants have worked hard to bring a derelict space back to full bloom as a community garden. The Barrowfield Burn Community Garden has been created by local community members who identified it as a problem area and have turned it into a real asset that the whole area can enjoy.

The land was previously an eye sore and a dumping ground for fly tippers. After an extensive exercise to purchase and clear the land, we secured grant funding and donations to help the local volunteers make the garden a haven for residents.

Ian Greig, is a local resident who has been heavily involved with the Community Garden.

He explained: “My home looks into the garden and before we got involved it was used as a dumping ground for fly-tippers. Looking at the mess every day affected my mental health so I contacted WSHA to see if anything could be done. A group of us started work in February and we had a lot of support from the local people who kindly made donations to support our work. It is being well used by the community - we have had local nurseries use it and local people have planted flowers and trees in remembrance of their loved ones and they will come along and have a cup of tea and a wee chat. The Community Garden has really brought the community together.”



Ian Greig



Garden Open Day

An official open day for the Community Garden was held in June with over 400 local people coming along and enjoying the day and there are plans for future community events.

If there is an area in your community that you think could be brought back to life, then please contact us.

Welcome



Welcome to the latest edition of our tenant newsletter, Westworld. I would like to give a special welcome to our new tenants who have transferred from Charing Cross and I hope you find this newsletter a useful way of finding out more about our work and services.

It is great to see the work that has happened to transform a derelict piece of land in Barrowfield into a real community asset – well done to everyone that has worked so hard to make it happen! If there are spaces in your area that you think could be brought back to life, then please get in touch.

In this issue you will read about our annual performance which we report to the Scottish Housing Regulator. I hope you find it reassuring that we have performed well in many areas and you can read the full report on our website which outlines how we will make improvements.

If you live in Glasgow or Ayrshire, it would be great if you would consider joining our Board and being a key part in how we make decisions about how we deliver services. Being part of our Board is an excellent opportunity to be involved in making a real difference to your community.

Remember you can also hear our latest news and updates on our Facebook page (WSHAScotland).

Best Wishes,

Brian Gannon
Chief Executive

Win a £50 Shopping Voucher!

Sign up for our new Customer App by 30th November 2022 and you will be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 One4All Shopping Voucher!

Our Customer App gives you 24/7 access to your tenancy information and request a number of services such as viewing rent balance and transactions, reporting a non-emergency repair and paying your rent.



How to register

To register you will need a reference number which is your rent account reference. You can find this on your rent statement or contact us on 0141 550 5600 or customer.service@westscot.co.uk

Search 'West of Scotland Housing' on your App Store or Google Play to download the app. We have also created video and written guidance on how to download and register for the App which you can find at <https://westscot.co.uk/customer-app/>



Key Highlights

Update on Charing Cross Transfer Promises 3

Scottish Social Housing Charter Report 4

Join our Board 6

Cost of Living Crisis Support 10

Delivering our Promises to Charing Cross

We are delighted to welcome all former Charing Cross Housing Association tenants to this edition of our regular newsletter.

The Transfer of Engagements between Charing Cross HA and West of Scotland HA (WSHA) took place as planned on 1st August after 96% of tenants voted in favour of the transfer in an independent ballot. This means that all tenants of Charing Cross HA are now tenants of WSHA. This also means that West of Scotland now has over 4,200 tenants and this provides a much stronger and more resilient future for our organisation.

In addition to the transfer of tenants we now also provide factoring services to an additional 900 factored owners.

Now that the Transfer has taken place, our task is to ensure that we deliver on the service and Investment Promises that we made that persuaded tenants to vote in favour of the Transfer to WSHA.

Transfer Commitments to Tenants/ Customers - Delivery Progress

- ✓ A rent freeze guarantee for all Charing Cross tenants for 2023-24
- ✓ Review of all Charing Cross service charges
- ✓ Freeze in management fee for factored owners for 2023-24
- ✓ Planned investment programme of up to £9.5m by the end of March 2027 including new windows, kitchens and bathrooms
- ✓ Keeping local office and expanding as a community hub / keeping local staff
- ✓ Access to range of wider support services (Handy Person, Energy and Money Advice and Digital support)
- ✓ A £100,000 kick-start local budget to support partnership projects to improve the wider environment
- ✓ A new residents association representing the Woodlands and Garnethill communities (and monitoring the transfer commitments)
- ✓ An estimated £300,000 of savings per year which will be used to support lower rent increases and faster and more investment in tenants' homes

The table below outlines progress made to date with some of the key Promises made to tenants:

TRANSFER PROMISE	Progress
<p>Review of Charing Cross Service Charges Work on this has started to ensure service charges are fair, transparent and represent value for Money. New charges will be applied from 1st April 2023.</p>	
<p>Planned Investment Programme of £9.5m We have received planning permission from Glasgow City Council for installing new double glazed windows where required and will be issuing a tender for contractors to bid for the work. Some tenants have also been contacted for surveys to plan for replacement of their kitchens.</p>	
<p>Keeping the former Charing Cross HA office in Ashley St and using as a Community Hub We have kept our promise and rebranded this as West of Scotland Housing Association Community Hub. We are now providing WSHA services from this Monday to Thursday and local community groups are already using it to hold meetings etc.</p>	
<p>Providing Access to a wider Range of Services Tenants in Woodlands and Garnethill are now able to access Handyperson services, Welfare Rights services, Energy and Money Advice, Digital support etc. from West of Scotland and our subsidiary Willowacre Trust.</p>	
<p>A new Residents Association representing Woodlands & Garnethill We have now held 4 meetings of this new group who are helping to ensure that we listen to the needs of both communities and in turn they help us make better decisions on investment and services.</p>	

Scottish Social Housing

Below you can find a summary of how we performed during 2021/22 in relation to the outcomes set by the Scottish Housing Regulator. You can find the full report, including actions we will take going forward, on our website www.westscot.co.uk



Going further...homes

We are proud to provide a home for life and we are committed to providing high-quality, safe and affordable homes that you are proud to call your own.

	2021/22	2020/21	SHN* Average
Stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	93%	96%	74%
Tenants satisfied with the quality of their homes	86%	95%	86%
Average time taken to complete emergency repairs	3.04 hours	3.35 hours	3 hours
Average time taken to complete nonemergency repairs	11.57 days	9.38 days	8.4 days
Repairs completed right first time	63%	64%	82%
Tenants satisfied with the repairs service	83%	94%	85%
Homes meeting EESSH**	99%	97%	94%

*SHN - The Scottish Housing Network (SHN) is a benchmarking group of Registered Social Landlords in Scotland. This allows us to compare our performance with similar sized housing associations

**EESSH - The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH) aims to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. It will help to reduce energy consumption, fuel poverty and the emission of greenhouse gases.



Going further...communities

A community to us is more than just building and managing affordable homes; it is about creating safe, socially inclusive, thriving, vibrant communities where tenants want to live. To us it is about ensuring that our tenants have access to training and employment opportunities, where tenants are supported to maximise their income, where they have improved health and wellbeing and feel good about their life and their community.

	2021/22	2020/21	SHN Average
Number of cases of anti-social behaviour reported	359	265	n/a
Number of cases resolved within locally agreed targets	96%	95.6%	96%
Tenants satisfied with how we manage their neighbourhood	88%	93%	84%

Charter Report 2021/22



Going further...people

People are at the heart of everything we do, whether it is our tenants or staff. We are committed to looking at new and innovative ways to deliver services that reflect the needs of our tenants and customers.

	2021/22	2020/21	SHN Average
Tenants satisfied with overall service	88%	91%	87%
Tenants who feel we are good at keeping them informed about services and outcomes	93%	99%	91%
Tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in our decision making	96%	100%	85%
New tenants sustaining tenancy for more than 12 months	92%	91%	91%
No. of complaints received	121 - stage 1 14 - stage 2	177 - stage 1 27 - stage 2	n/a
Complaints responded to within timescale	99% - stage 1 100% - stage 2	98% - stage 1 93% - stage 2	98% - stage 1 96% - stage 2
Average Time to respond to complaints	4.19 days - stage 1 7.38 days - stage 2	5.46 days - stage 1 12.48 days - stage 2	3.72 days - stage 1 15.77 days - stage 2

Going further...value for money



Achieving value for money is important to us and we want to ensure we provide high-quality and cost efficient services that meet your aspirations.

	2021/22	2020/21	SHN Average
Tenants who felt their rent represents good value for money	84%	88%	81%
Rent lost through properties being empty	0.79%	0.86%	0.86%
Average number of days to let a property	31 days	57 days	34 days
Rent collected from tenants as a % of total rent due	101.02%	99.7%	99.2%
Gross rent arrears	£943,378	£1,037,537	n/a
Rent arrears as % of rent due	5.7%	6.61%	4.7%
Owners satisfied with factoring service	72%	72%	68%

Getting Involved

**Live in Glasgow or Ayrshire?
Passionate about your community?
Join our Board!**



Being part of our Board is an excellent opportunity to be involved in making a real difference to your community. It is important to us that our tenants shape our direction and activities and we ensure this by having tenant members making up the majority of our Board.

Your role as a Board member will involve attendance at meetings, attending training sessions, and contributing to decision making.

What makes a good Board Member

We are looking for Board members from Glasgow and Ayrshire who share our values and has the following skills and experience:

- A genuine passion for social housing and commitment to helping tenants and communities.
- Ability to actively participate and contribute their views on Board matters.
- Ability to represent tenants and communities on the Board in relation to strategic issues.

How to apply

For an informal chat and to find out more, please contact Jennifer Cairns, Director of Corporate Services on 0141 550 5600 or Jennifer.cairns@westscot.co.uk

Tenant Scrutiny

We have recently re-started our Tenant Scrutiny Group which paused its work during the pandemic. The Scrutiny Group works with us to assess how well we are delivering services to tenants and other customers. They do this using the following methods:

- Tenant surveys to gather views about services
- Staff surveys to identify challenges they face
- Comparing our policies and procedures with other landlords
- Assessing complaints and performance information to identify common trends and themes
- Developing an understanding of any legislation that covers the policy area
- Carrying out mystery shopping and site visits

The group members have undertaken training to allow them to undertake the above and have identified two areas of services that they wish to look at. This includes assessing how well our staff are adhering to our new Customer Care Standards and Values – through mystery shopping calls where they take on the role of customers and follow agreed scripts. The second area relates to estate management and they will be in touch with tenants in the coming months to get an understanding from you how you feel WSHA deliver services to you.

Tenant Advisory Group

Our Tenant Advisory Group has continued to meet on a monthly basis over recent months. They have discussed and provided feedback on a number of issues in this time including:

- Receiving an update on the Willowacre Trust Business Plan
- The proposed lettings strategy which sets out how we will allocate our home
- They gave views on the draft allocation policy mentioned below
- They visited a proposed supplier of materials for our kitchen programme
- They considered proposals for reconvening both our tenant scrutiny group mentioned above, and our Rate Your Estate scheme

The Group also received a presentation from Brian Gannon, our Chief Executive Officer, about the proposed Corporate Business Plan and Key Business Objectives (KBOs) for the year ahead. The Business Plan sets out our overall strategy, priorities and financial plan for the next 5 years and is reviewed annually. The plan includes our KBOS for the year ahead – the proposed objectives which Brian discussed with the Group included:

- Working in partnership with our repairs contractor to improve service delivery
- Deliver our promises to former Charing Cross tenants
- To continue delivery of our Green Strategy
- To firm up investment plans to ensure our homes meet energy efficiency targets
- To support communities through the cost of living crisis
- To deliver effective IT infrastructure to achieve efficiencies and better services
- To implement our HR strategy and embed our values
- To implement our new allocations policy and improve waiting list management

As part of our annual rent consultation we will be asking for tenants view on these proposed objectives in the coming months.

Allocations Consultation

We recently undertook a review of our housing allocations policy and asked tenants and waiting list applicants for their views. The main change in the policy was how we manage our housing list.

We proposed to move from a points based system to a system using banding. The key benefit for applicants is that they would have a better understanding their priority for rehousing.

We received just under 100 responses to our consultation with 83% of tenants agreeing with our proposed policy, and 85% agreeing with how we would prioritise applicants. There were some people who disagreed with how we would prioritise applicants but there was an acceptance that what we were proposing was clear and transparent. Our Board approved the proposed policy in June, and once we have implemented the new policy we will be in touch with all applicants to advise how their existing application is impacted.



Safety in your Home

Fire Safety Advice

**Every hour of every day there's a house fire in Scotland
Everybody's home is at risk of fire. It's important to know
how to reduce the chances of fire happening in your home.
One risk can be the chargers for your mobile phones:**

Don't charge your phone when you're sleeping or out of the house. It could overheat and cause a fire.

Never charge any electrical devices, including phones and tablets, on your bed or under your pillow while you sleep.

Avoid fake mobile phone chargers which are often made with poor quality components that fail to meet UK safety regulations. This means they can cause injury, electric shocks and even fires.

Overcharging your phone can be dangerous – make sure when your device is charged you remove it from the charger.



For more information please visit www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety

Keeping You Safe

We want to ensure that you enjoy a peaceful, secure, safe, clean and tidy environment. We carry out regular inspections of common close areas to ensure there are no health and safety risks to residents.

It is important that all common areas must be kept clean and tidy. Communal areas should remain a sterile environment, clear of all combustible items and objects which could cause obstructions and prevent tenants from leaving their homes in the event of an emergency.

We would like to remind tenants that no items should be stored within a close or communal area. These pictures are from a fire caused by items being left in the close which caused substantial damage, however thankfully there were no fatalities.

We ask that all belongings be removed from a communal space as they are a fire risk. These areas need to remain sterile to ensure the safety of all tenants and you should not put items such as carpets or plant pots in communal areas. Any items stored within the close will be requested to be removed by the owner, should they fail to do so we will remove the item and store it for a period of 1 month. All tenants should be considerate to one another and ensure no dumping or storing of items are within any communal space.

Tenants should contact their local authority to arrange uplifts of items they wish to be disposed of. They should not be stored in a communal space awaiting collection.



Work begins on Scotland's largest Passivhaus development



We have started construction of Scotland's largest Passivhaus development which will see 90 highly energy efficient homes created for mid market rent. The £21million project, located in Dundashill in Glasgow, is the first development on-site as part of wider masterplan to regenerate the area.

The homes will be built to Passivhaus standard which are created to achieve one of the highest standards of energy efficiency. They will be low carbon by utilising air source heat pump technology which reduces the building's carbon footprint and contributes towards the Scottish Government's target for emissions from heating buildings to reach net zero by 2045. These ultra-low energy buildings require little energy use for heating or cooling which means very low energy use for tenants.

Funded by a £10.1million of grant from Glasgow City Council's and £11.1million of WSHA loan finance, construction is now underway by CCG (Scotland) Ltd with the homes expected to be complete in late 2023. Once complete, the homes will be managed by Westscot Living (a subsidiary of West of Scotland Housing Association) and consist of a mix of 1 to 3 bedroom flats with high quality landscaping, urban play area and exceptional views overlooking the city.

This development is part of a wider regeneration of the former Diageo Distillery site. Scottish Canals, with funding support from City Deal, has created six development plots across the site.

Andrew Kubski, Director of Development and Asset Management at WSHA, said: "This fantastic development demonstrates that delivering quality housing takes tremendous patience and resilience – it has taken us 4 years to get on site. Needless to say I am absolutely thrilled to now be on site constructing at pace our second affordable Passivhaus development which is the largest of its kind in Scotland. It will create much needed high quality affordable mid market homes close to Glasgow city centre. The new Passivhaus homes will be created to achieve one of the highest standards of energy efficiency and this will lead to lower fuel usage for tenants and help to address fuel poverty."

Councillor Kenny McLean, convener for Housing at Glasgow City Council, added: "This is a significant housing development for Glasgow in a number of ways. Not only will these homes require less energy, reducing emissions and help the city meet our Net Zero targets, but it marks a new stage in the regeneration of North Glasgow as Dundashill becomes the latest area there to see homebuilding begin. Given its significance, the council is pleased to help fund these new homes on the canal corridor."



Improvements to Repairs Service

We were recently required to choose a new repairs contractor as Turners Services, who were the contractor, advised that they were unable to undertake this on our behalf. Turners Services ended all of their contracts with housing associations for this type of work as they withdrew from the sector.

At short notice we selected a new contractor, Everwarm, to deliver this service to our customers. To ensure continuity of service to our customers the transition period was shorter than we would have normally expected if we were to change contractors in a more planned way and as a result there have been a number of performance issues. This has meant that both WSHA and Everwarm have been unable to deliver the high service levels that our customers have come to expect and that WSHA and Everwarm want to deliver.

Our repairs team are working very closely with Everwarm to resolve these issues and have agreed a plan that covers the main areas where we need to see improvement. We want to reassure all of our customers that both Everwarm and WSHA are aware of the issues and working together to provide a much improved service as soon as possible. In the meantime, your patience and understanding is hugely appreciated.

Cost of Living Crisis - Advice & Support

We recognised the ongoing impact that the increase in cost of living is having on our customers and communities, especially moving into the winter months when fuel bills are likely to be higher. It is important that you continue to pay your rent, on time, each month and should you be experiencing difficulty in doing so, please contact our Income Maximisation Team on 0141 550 5059 or Welfare Rights Team on 0141 550 5662 who can arrange to see you in our office, Hub or at home to carry out a benefits check in order to maximise your income. Our Money Advisor Darren Foy can offer advice with any other debts you are struggling to pay and you can contact him on 0141 550 5664.

The table below outlines the existing and additional financial support which is available for households.

Payment	Comments/Eligibility	Amount		Payment Date
Cost of Living Payment	A non-repayable £650 payment will be given to households receiving the following benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit • Income-based Jobseekers Allowance • Income-related Employment & Support Allowance • Income Support • Pension Credit 	£650 paid over two instalments		2022 - first payment been made. Second payment due to be paid between 8th & 23rd November 22.
Disability Cost of Living Payment	A one off payment of £150 for those receiving disability benefits. To be eligible, you must have had a successful claim for a disability benefit in progress on 25th May 2022	£150		September/October 2022
Energy Grant	A non-repayable £400 discount on energy bills between October 2022 and March 2023 for domestic electricity customers.	£400 one off from bill or over six months into bank accounts		October 22 – March 23
Pensioner Cost of Living Payment	A one off payment of £300 will go to households that receive the Winter Fuel Payment. This is an additional top-up.	£300		November/December 2022
Warm Home	This is a one off payment to help with the cost of energy over winter. It's usually added as credit to your electricity bill. It's likely you will be entitled to this if you or your partner receive the Guarantee Credit part of Pension Credit.	£150		Winter 2022 Discount
Winter Fuel Payment		Over 65	Over 80	
	You qualify and live alone (or none of the people living with you qualify)	£200	£300	November/December 2022
	You qualify and live with someone under 80 who also qualifies	£100	£200	November/December 2022
	You qualify and live with someone 80 or over who also qualifies	£100	£150	November/December 2022
	You qualify, live in a care home and do not get certain benefits	£100	£150	November/December 2022

Smart Meters & What it Means for You

Over the last few years the smart meter roll out has picked up pace across the UK, and suppliers are actively trying to encourage customers to have a smart meter installed in their home. But what are smart meters? What are the benefits and are there any pitfalls to having a smart meter in your home? Our Energy Advice Officer has undertaken training with Smart Energy GB who were set up to assist in this roll out and has compiled below some answers to the most common questions:

What is a Smart meter?

Smart meters are the next generation of electricity and gas meters and have inbuilt technology that allows them to communicate with your supplier to send them regular readings. Households also receive an In Home Display unit that shows in near real time how much energy you are using and crucially how much it is costing you.

Benefits:

- No need to submit meter readings.
 - Your smart meter will send reads automatically to your supplier.
- The In Home Display allows you to track your usage in near real time.
- Accurate bills in billing mode.
- Easier top ups on pre-payment mode.
 - In pre-payment mode you have the benefit of being able to top up online, over the phone, through an app or at your local retailer, but you don't have to insert a card or key into the meter to add the credit to your balance. It automatically goes onto your meter which means no more struggles to get to your meters.



Pitfalls:

- Smart meters are not available to everyone....yet.
 - As they use a secure and encrypted mobile signal to send and receive data, older homes such as tenements that have solid walls construction can block the signals.
 - Smart meters are not available for some electric meter set ups yet such as economy 2000. This should change in the future but is not available at the moment.
- Smart meter will not reduce your energy bills on their own.
 - The in home display allows a household to see when they are using energy in their home and using this knowledge, can help identify where you can reduce your energy usage through changing the way you use your appliances and heating. In this way you could reduce your bills.
- Smart meters can breakdown.
 - Nothing is indestructible, and the meters or in home displays can stop working. When this happens you should contact your supplier to arrange a repair.

Further help and information

If you have any questions or need any help then you can contact our Energy Advice officer by calling 0141 550 5664, or completing a referral form on our website at <https://westscot.co.uk/willowacre/energy-advice/> where you will also find out more information and tips on how to reduce your energy costs and manage your heating more efficiently.

Alterations and improvements

If you wish to complete alterations or improvements within your home or garden area, please ensure you get permission before proceeding with any work. This includes garden huts and summer houses. Please note that receiving permission is a requirement of your tenancy agreement and you may be asked to remove any alterations/improvement that permission has not been granted for.

Performance/Complaints

Complaints and Customer Satisfaction

We are committed to listening to your views so we can deliver services more effectively, or where we can do more things that you want us to do. To support us to do this we regularly monitor the complaints we receive, and also have an independent company Research Resource undertake monthly satisfaction surveys. Where an issue comes up as part of a complaint, or is fed back to us by Research Resource we will look to make changes to how we work.



Our customer satisfaction figures fell in quarter one, particularly in relation to our repairs service and in customer satisfaction with our contribution to the management of the neighbourhood.

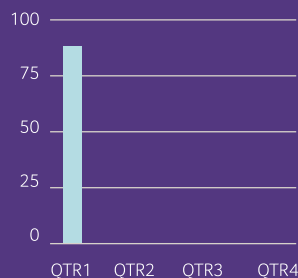
For repairs satisfaction the surveys were undertaken when we were in the process of transitioning to a new repairs contractor which explains some of the fall, but we are aware that communication remains an issue and we will work with the new contractor to improve in this area.

In terms of management of the neighbourhood a lot of the negative feedback related to bin areas and dumping of rubbish. We will look to introduce a new contract for bulk uplift and in a new close cleaning contract will include cleaning of bin stores.

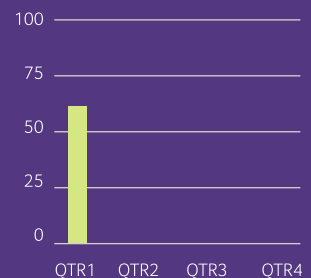
If you are unhappy with any aspect of our service then you can report a complaint by emailing haveyoursay@westscot.co.uk or calling 0141 550 5600.

WSHA Customer Satisfaction 2022/23

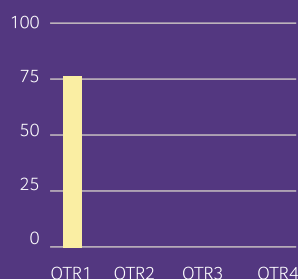
Overall, how satisfied were you with the repairs and maintenance service received?



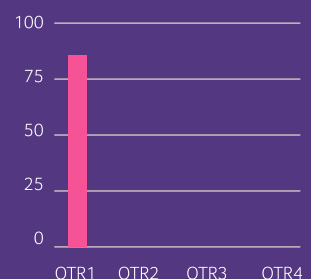
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the landlords's management of the neighbourhood you live in?



Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by West of Scotland Housing Association?



Taking into account the accommodation and services your landlord provides, do you think your rent for this property represents good value for money?



For more information please contact:

t: 0141 550 5600

w. westscot.co.uk

e. customer.service@westscot.co.uk

f. WSHAScotland

t. WSHAScotland

