

Building on progress for a brighter Hillhead

A RECOGNISED SCOTTISH CHARITY SCO29998

## IT'S BUSINESS AS (THE NEW) NORMAL!

**We hope all our tenants and their families are keeping safe and well during these strange and unsettling times.**

When we closed our office to the public in March due to government guidance in light of the Coronavirus pandemic, we did not anticipate the situation would go on quite so long....

Even though our office is closed, all our staff

have carried on working from day 1, and continue to do so to this day. The majority of us are working from home, with only a few staff members remaining in the office to manage our mail systems and process rent payments. Our property services officers and estates staff also maintain a presence in the area to deal with inspections and remedial works in empty properties.



### OFFICE HOURS



The office hours are currently 10am-3pm with the homeworkers keeping to the normal 9am-5pm.

Phone calls to the office number should only be in order to make rent payments or in the event you cannot reach the person you are looking for.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a contact information sheet detailing direct telephone numbers for our staff. Please keep this sheet handy - by using these numbers you will be able to get your query dealt with more quickly by the correct staff member.



# Need help with your Finances?

**Since lockdown, times have been challenging in different ways for us all. Trying to seek the help and advice we need has proved to be more difficult with organisations, business and charities - through having their staff work from home and contact details not being as straight forward as they usually are.**

If you are struggling with your rent and feel that you need help, we are still providing support and advice to all our tenants. Unfortunately, bills still need to be paid and your rent should be a priority. Ignoring letters, phone calls and emails from us will not make the problem go away. It is important you speak to us in order that we can try to help you as early as possible. If you need to contact any member of staff about paying your rent or have concerns about your benefits please refer to the staff contact sheet included with this newsletter.

If your rent is paid by Universal Credit or Housing Benefit it is your responsibility to keep all your details updated and if any information is requested you should supply this as quickly as possible.

Many people have had to claim benefits for the first time and it can be a daunting process. If you need any advice or help with this, our Welfare Rights Officers Moira and Morag can help guide you through the process.

You might be entitled to benefits to help with housing costs if your income has reduced, even if you're still working.

There are things that can be done if you're struggling to pay your bills because of coronavirus, for example your council tax, rent, loans and energy bills. Our Welfare Rights Officers can help you to access financial help of different types. They can;

- Check if you can get free school meals or supermarket vouchers
- Check if you can get help with your



- Check if you can pay less council tax
- Check what help you can get with your bills

If you need help with debt or general money advice the Citizens Advice Bureau can help you and they have an office based in Kirkintilloch. This is a free and confidential service. You can call them on **0141 775 3220** or visit their website: **www.edcab.org**

Please contact us if you need further advice.

## A LITTLE EXTRA HELP



**It has been a strange few months for everyone. While working from home the Welfare Rights Officers have continued to provide their usual service offering advice and help with benefit issues, including appeals. On top of that they have also been accessing a variety of funds which have offered additional support during the pandemic.**

This support has included funds to purchase vouchers which we have

distributed to tenants identified by housing staff as being in particular difficulties. This has included £25 vouchers to help with food shopping, vouchers for help with back to school costs, and help to top up prepayment meters for gas and electricity. There have also been some funds available from Cash for Kids and other charities offering support at this difficult time. We have even managed to get some laptop equipment for a few young people in the neighbourhood to help with their school and college work.

As well as this direct help to our

tenants we have also been able to distribute some money to other local organisations and groups whom we know work with local people, such as the foodbank, Women's Aid and GRACE, to name a few, so we are also providing indirect help to people who are struggling during this very difficult time.

If you are affected financially by the lockdown and are struggling with your bills please contact the housing or welfare rights staff as we may be able to provide some help.

# Rubbish Disposal



During lockdown, the Housing Management Team have continued to deal with estate management issues. With more people at home we have all been busy clearing out our houses but this has led to an increase in rubbish, including in some cases bulky items that cannot be easily disposed of. Although the Council has re-introduced the uplift of recycling and food waste, the special uplift service has not resumed and at this time there is no date for this service starting back. If you are able to take items to the local recycling centre at Bishopbriggs then you can do so at no charge.

If you are clearing out bulky items such as furniture which is in good condition, please check with local charities to see if they are accepting donations at this time. They usually uplift free of charge meaning that you and the charity benefit as you don't need to pay for an uplift. If the items cannot be donated, then we would ask that you do not put them out for uplift until you have found someone that can remove them for you and you have the money to pay for the service. If items are left to sit in gardens for an extended time, it is unpleasant for other residents to look at and, of greater concern, could potentially be a fire hazard for your own and other families.

## Keep on cutting that grass!

The growing season is not quite over yet so we still have another few weeks of making sure our gardens are kept neat and tidy. Please continue to cut grass, weed areas and cut back any shrubs that are your responsibility. Garden waste is being uplifted by the Council again free of charge, but please make sure any garden refuse is placed in the green bin only, as it will not be lifted from other bins. If you require a green bin these are provided by the Council free of charge, please call them on 0300 1234510.

No one likes to live in an area where gardens are overgrown and rubbish is left to lie. It is an obligation of your Tenancy Agreement to attend to these issues so please ensure that you do. Whilst Housing Management staff are not back in the office we are still aware of the issues and can take action if necessary.



## THINGS WE ARE DOING IN SPITE OF LOCKDOWN

**The office closing to the public with most of the staff working from home has indeed brought some challenges. Although a few staff members are on site the rest of the staff are all working behind the scenes to provide all of our tenants and residents with a comprehensive service.**

All services that we provided before lockdown are still being provided - for example rent enquires, anti social complaints, allocating properties and all other estate management enquires. Housing Officers and Assistants can still be contacted through one of the direct numbers on the staff contact sheet enclosed with this newsletter. Alternatively you can email [admin@hillheadhousing.org](mailto:admin@hillheadhousing.org) or send a text to **07491 163429**.

If you have any additional issues caused as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, we can offer assistance and advice. Do not feel that you have to struggle on your own - we are here to assist you just as much as we did when the office was open and you could speak to us face to face.

We hope that it will not be too much longer before we are back working in the office and will be able to open our doors for you to pop in and speak to us.



## Changes to your Household? *KEEP US INFORMED!!!*

**We previously advised tenants that The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 had introduced a number of significant changes to tenants' rights under the terms of your Tenancy Agreement.**

As a result of these changes, some of which are noted below, it is important that you inform us of any changes to your household. This includes letting us know about anyone who has previously moved in with you who you have not already told us about. In the future, you should tell us when anyone moves into or out of your home. Although many staff are still working from home they can be contacted via their direct line numbers. Or you can email [admin@hillheadhousing.org](mailto:admin@hillheadhousing.org) to report any changes to your household.

### **Subletting:**

If you want to sublet all or part

of your house to someone else, you must get Hillhead Housing Association's approval. You **MUST** have been the tenant for at least 12 months prior to applying.

### **Assignment:**

If you want to assign your tenancy (pass the tenancy on to someone else), you must apply for permission, and the person you want to assign the tenancy to **MUST** have been **registered** as living at your address for at least 12 months prior to the application.

### **Joint Tenancy:**

If you want another person to become a joint tenant with you, again you must ask

permission from Hillhead Housing Association, **and** the proposed joint tenant **MUST** have been registered with Hillhead Housing Association as living at your address for at least 12 months prior to your application.

### **Succession:**

There have been changes to the rules around when certain people can succeed to (take over) a tenancy on the death of a tenant - these changes do not apply to a spouse, civil partner or joint tenant. To make sure your rights of succession are protected, you **MUST** have told us about any person moving in with you at the time they start living with you.

## Customer Care Group

**We've been missing holding our regular Customer Care Group meetings in the office. It was always a good chance to catch up over a cup of tea and a biscuit and find out how people feel about our services and the ways we could improve. The last few meetings prior to lockdown were well attended and helped to shape our current Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Customer Care Policy which were both approved by Committee during 2020.**

Group face to face meetings are obviously not possible in the short to medium term but we are still keen to hear your thoughts and views on the Association's services. We will shortly be getting in touch with our list of contacts for the Customer Care Group to offer the facility to meet staff virtually using your laptop, tablet or mobile phone. We will also consider ways in which those who do not have internet access can participate and make their voices heard. If you are on the Customer Care Group expect a letter shortly. If you are not on the group but would like to be please contact Catherine McKiernan by e-mail [catherine@hillheadhousing.org](mailto:catherine@hillheadhousing.org) or by phone **07394 905900**

## Allocations

**One of our most important policies, the Allocations Policy, will fall due for review and updating early next year. This policy determines who gets any empty property that arises within the Hillhead stock. It is very important to us that we consider tenant and applicant views on how we allocate our homes.**

We can gather views in any way which is most convenient to any tenant who wants to be involved whether it's just a 5 minute chat or receiving full drafts of the policy or anything in between. Therefore, if you would like to be involved in the Policy that will determine how houses are let up to the Year 2024(!) please give us a shout and we can talk to you about the different ways to be involved. Catherine will be leading the review of the policy so contact her directly [catherine@hillheadhousing.org](mailto:catherine@hillheadhousing.org) or **07394 905900**, or speak to any member of staff and ask that your name is passed to Catherine.

# Repairs Service

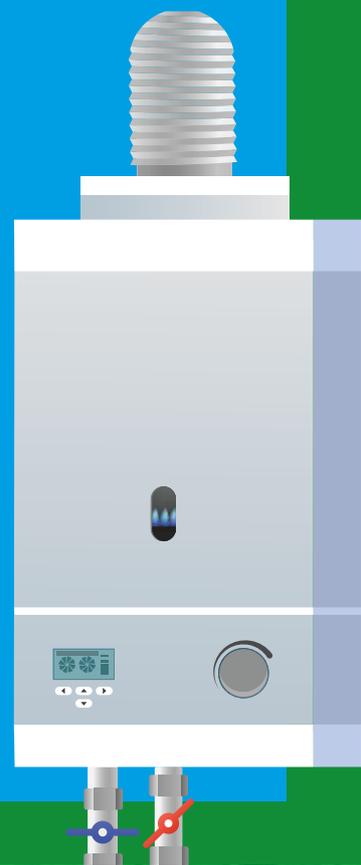
**Our full repairs service resumed on 3 August 2020. We are now attending to all emergency, urgent and routine repairs. However, due to the backlog of repairs, routine repairs may take longer than 10 days to complete.**

Our Property Services Officers are carrying out any necessary inspections and will wear PPE if they need to visit your home. The repairs operatives will also wear appropriate PPE while carrying out any repairs in your home. We would ask tenants to adopt the social distancing requirements as outlined by the Scottish Government to ensure staff and resident safety while anyone is carrying out a repair or inspection in your home. Should anyone be suffering symptoms of Covid-19 or you suspect you may have come into contact with someone who has the virus, then please let our staff or contractor know.

Please call a member of the Property Services team using the direct dial phone numbers on the enclosed staff contact sheet to report a repair or to arrange an inspection.

# Gas Servicing

**The Association has a legal obligation to carry out an Annual Gas Service within your home. If your boiler service is due in the near future, you will receive prior notice with an appointment date. Our gas heating repairs contractor (Gas Sure) will ensure the service takes place safely and in accordance with current Government Guidelines.**



# Environmental Works

**Our fencing contractor P1 Solutions are back on site, working on our Environmental Programme. The current phase of works includes properties in Redbrae Road, Hardmuir Road, Blackdyke Road and Waverley Crescent. Tenants will be lettered before any works commence and should note that not all gardens will have identical works carried out. If you have any queries or questions about the works please do not hesitate to contact our Property Services Officer Malcolm Macdonald.**

We would ask tenants to remain in your home while the operatives are working within your garden area to help maintain social distancing requirements.

# Grass Cutting

**Grass cutting works are still currently ongoing and our contractor Nurture Landscapes continue to work on our open spaces, as well in the gardens of properties included in the grass**

**cutting programme. Again, we would ask tenants to remain indoors while the operatives are working in your garden.**



# Installation of Smoke and Heat detectors

**The Scottish Government has introduced new rules aiming to reduce the amount of deaths caused by household fires in Scotland. All Scottish homes will now be required to have smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors fitted. These new improved standards requires:**

- One smoke Alarm installed in the room most frequently used for general living purposes
- One smoke alarm in every circulation space on each floor, such as hallways and landings
- One heat alarm to be installed in every kitchen
- All alarms should be ceiling mounted and interlinked.

There is also a requirement for carbon monoxide detectors to be installed where there are carbon fuelled appliances such as a boiler.

Our estates team are currently carrying out the installations of these new alarms within the area. If your home is included in the programme you will receive a letter with an appointment date. The works will take up to half an hour to complete, but will however ensure that your home is up to Scottish safety standards. Again, our Estates team will wear appropriate PPE while working in your home.

Your co-operation in this matter is vital and much appreciated.



## Test It Tuesday!



**Making sure you have working smoke & heat alarms could save your life. Test them weekly to make sure if fire does break out everyone in your home has time to get out safely. More: <https://firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/fo>**

# Community Garden

**We are happy to report that our Community Garden has reopened. If you wish to become involved with the garden and enjoy growing your own vegetables and connecting with new people then please contact our Property Services Officer Marie Savage for more information.**

If you are visiting the garden at this time, please ensure that you adopt the social distancing requirements as outlined by the Scottish Government to ensure everyone's safety while in the garden. We look forward to seeing you there.



# HOW WELL ARE WE DOING?

The tables below let you see how we are performing against some key activities during the periods January to March and April to June 2020.

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.

## KEY HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

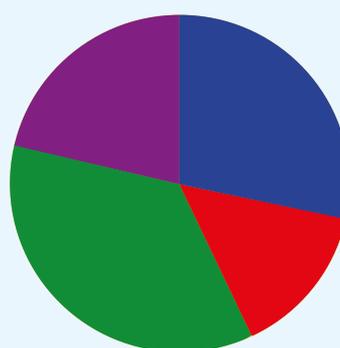
### RENT ARREARS

Month	Tenant Arrears	Level of Arrears	Rent Arrears Target
January	£142,114.03	3.91	4.0%
February	£150,089.18	4.09	4.0%
March	£158,648.81	4.32	4.0%
April	£189,977.13	4.95	5.0%
May	£195,819.99	5.15	5.0%
June	£195,869.15	5.16	5.0%

### ALLOCATIONS

Month	No. of Lets
January	5
February	6
March	1
April	0
May	0
June	2

### WHO WERE PROPERTIES ALLOCATED TO?



- Section 5
- Nomination
- Waiting List
- Transfer - Hillhead Tenants

### REPAIRS RESPONSE TIMES (excludes gas servicing)

Category/Month	% Completed within time scales					
	January	February	March	April	May	June
Emergency (24hours)	94.44%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Urgent (3 days)	98.97%	100%	97.59%	100%	100%	93.75%
Routine (10 days)	96.87%	99.17%	96.72%	80.00%	100%	81.82%
Voids (7 days)	100%	100%	100%	n/a	n/a	77.78%
All Repairs - HHA 2000	97.77%	99.58%	97.75%	98.25%	100%	92.39%

## HOW WE COMPARE TO OTHER HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

We compare our performance against those of 8 other housing associations across Scotland every quarter. The table below lets you see how we are performing against the average of this group at the end of June 2020. The average time to let a house was significantly impacted by the complete lockdown due to Coronavirus throughout April & May.

Performance Area	Hillhead	Housing Association Group
Rent Arrears	5.16%	4%
Rent Loss for empty houses/flats	0.21%	0.21%
Average time taken to re-let a house	115 days	55.25 days
Average number of days to complete non emergency repairs	2.28 days	2.20 days

# BUSINESS OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR 2020/2021

Each Year the Association agrees on a number of key business objectives for the following 12 months. Below is a table which explains how much progress we are making.

The Business Objectives were agreed before Corona Virus hit us, so in some cases our work has been affected by the impact of the Virus.

No.	Objective	Lead Team
1	<b>To invest £500,000 in Phases 2 and 3 of wider environmental improvements by March 2021.</b> Works ongoing and on track for investment as noted. Spend to date £45,000 since return to site.	Development & Property Services
2	To complete painter work programme at Phase 2 and 4 newbuild Surveys of stock commencing this week, expect to be able to complete this year, however Covid has caused delays	Development & Property Services
3	<b>To achieve a development agreement with CALA Homes for sites at Fauldhead Road and Chryston Road by September 2020.</b> Sites under review by CALA Homes	Development & Property Services
4	To resume office based service delivery in COVID-19 compliant environment by August/September 2020. Office prepared; awaiting Scottish Government guidance to commence.	Development & Property Services
5	<b>To complete all non-emergency repairs within 6 days. (3 for urgent and 10 for routine).</b> Last year's average time was 3 days, first quarter this year 2.65 days – however limited urgent/routine issued to date. 6 days will be achievable however expect average time to take longer.	Development & Property Services
6	<b>To complete smoke and heat detector upgrades by Feb 2021.</b> We are working on a new programme and still aim to complete by the deadline subject to access to Tenants' homes.	Development & Property Services
7	<b>To maintain rent arrears below 5.0% by March 2021.</b> Current tenant arrears at end June 2020 are 5.16%. Given the sustained and severe economic impact of the crisis the level of arrears is likely to increase.	Housing Management
8	<b>To secure additional benefits income of £500,000 for Hillhead Tenants by March 2021.</b> Benefit income of £80,461.31 secured during first 3 months, plus additional various "crisis" funds secured and issued to tenants totalling approximately £2800.	Housing Management
9	<b>To continue to provide Tenancy Support Services to 45 of the Association's most vulnerable tenants by March 2021.</b> 14 tenants supported during the first 3 months of the year.	Housing Management
10	<b>To review Housing List by September 2020.</b> Progress has been impacted by COVID-19 due to staff working from home.	Housing Management
11	<b>To re-let voids within an average of 21 days. (excluding COVID 19 voids).</b> At 30 June average time is 115 days. The vast majority of that period is due to the lockdown when all letting activity was entirely halted from mid-March to mid-April. Two sign-ups were done in late June.	Housing Management/ Property Services
12	<b>To adopt the new set of Model Rules by September 2020.</b> Committee approval in July and will be subject of SGM in September 2020	Finance & Corporate Services
13	<b>To complete and implement IT systems review by March 2021.</b> Tender being prepared for consultants for issue in August 2020	Finance & Corporate Services
14	<b>To carry out a Business Planning review by September 2020.</b> Progress has restarted following decision to defer the Stock Condition Survey to 2021	Finance & Corporate Services
15	<b>To increase the number of Members by 10% by March 2021.</b> At 30 June we have 57 members.	Finance & Corporate Services
16	<b>To introduce a new performance management framework by November 2020.</b> New style of Committee Reporting prepared August 2020	Finance & Corporate Services

■ Achieved
 ■ On Target
 ■ Not Achieved

# GENERAL MEETINGS 2020

Our twentieth Annual General Meeting is taking place on Wednesday 16 September. It will be immediately preceded by a Special General Meeting which is required in order to approve the Association's new Model Rules. Due to the current restrictions still in place, both meetings will take place over Zoom which will be another first for us, as we would normally hold such meetings in our office or in the Community Centre. We hope both meetings will go ahead without any technical hitches!

# COMPLAINTS

The following table presents complaints resolved between 1 January and 30 June 2020

Method of Complaint	Nature of Complaint	Complaints resolved within policy timescales?	Outcome	Service Change / Improvement required
Letter	Issue re rechargeable repairs – claims was not informed	Yes	Letter from Head of Property Services referring to previous correspondence and offering to discuss. No further contact	N/a
Email	Ongoing issue with utility suppliers at newbuild property plus other issues	No	HHA dealt with all issues within their remit. Other outstanding matters with Building Contractor	N/a
Email	Boiler fault, lack of work carried out to property	No	Correspondence from Head of Property Services confirming works history and advising further inspection would take place after pandemic situation eases	N/a
Phone call	Unhappy with request made by staff member	Yes	Letter from Director apologising for any distress caused	N/a
Email	Dissatisfaction with grass cutting service	Yes	Property Services Officer visited property, contractor asked to return.	Monitor service
Phone call	Unhappy with service from landscape contractor	Yes	Head of Property Services spoke to tenant and contractor – matter resolved	N/a

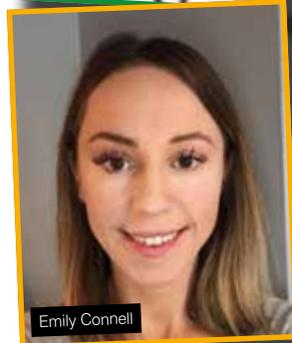
# A new face in the Housing Team

Last month our Housing Assistant Kelly Wallace finished up on maternity leave as she is expecting her second baby at the end of this month. It wasn't the normal send off we would have had but we managed a zoom session with her to wish her all the best!

Interviews took place last month for Kelly's replacement during her leave - again via Zoom, which was a "first" in our recruitment process! And we are delighted to welcome Emily Connell to our team. Emily started with us on 1 September, even though her employment has started from her home! We are sure some of you will get the chance to speak with Emily over the next few months – and perhaps even meet her in person one day! We hope Emily enjoys her time with Hillhead.



Kelly Wallace



Emily Connell

# End of an Era at Hillhead!

We are sorry to report that we are losing one of our most treasured members of staff after 16 years of service with the Association.

Our office cleaner Dorothy Semple has unfortunately decided that it is time to hang up her marigolds for good and she retired on 7 September. It has been a pleasure to have Dorothy working with us over the years – we have all loved her chat and have shared many a laugh with her. She will probably be most missed by her partner in crime, our other office cleaner Dorothy (yes another Dorothy!), but hopefully it won't be long until we find her company again.

Another consequence of Covid is that we weren't able to say goodbye to our Dot the way we would have liked to. Indeed, many of us have not



Dorothy Semple (left) and Dorothy Campbell (right)

even seen her since March as she was placed on furlough at the start of lockdown. But she was delighted with the cards and gifts received, and we hope she will pop in to see us when things are a bit more "normal". We all wish her all the very best and thank her for all her hard work, her cheerful spirit, and for reminding us all to take our Tupperware tubs home with us!



## Lockdown Diaries

Those of you who visit our website or social media pages may have seen the weekly diaries some of our staff put together to give a flavour of how the pandemic situation impacted on their normal working weeks.

These have been pulled together to create a special Staff Diary publication and this is also included with this newsletter.

## Catherine Mackay-McCann

We are saddened to report the passing of one of our Committee Members Catherine Mackay-McCann, after a spell of ill health. Catherine was a valued member of our Management Committee and positively contributed to many discussions and decisions. Although Catherine passed away in February of this year, we have not had the opportunity to make this announcement due to the pandemic situation. Our thoughts remain with Catherine's family and friends.

# GRACE HAS BEEN VERY BUSY SUPPORTING MEMBERS AND OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

**Achievements over 12 weeks of lockdown include:**

**20** Mobile Phones



**20** SIM Plans

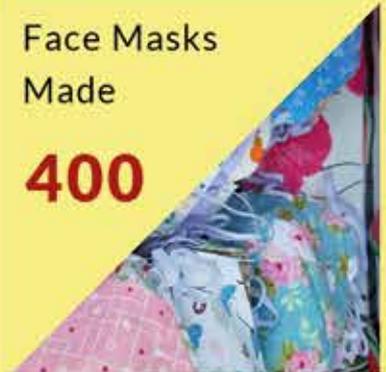


**260**  
Zoom Meetings

**2678**  
Zoom Participants

Face Masks Made

**400**



Gardening Packs

**45**



**125**

Family Craft Packs



**TESCO**  
FairShare FoodCloud

**249**

Food Bags Deliveries

**30** Advanced Art Packs



**5** Laptop's



**2** Printer's

Counselling Sessions **144**



**302** Wellbeing Sessions



Android Tablets

**20**



[www.graceaftercare.net](http://www.graceaftercare.net)



GRACE GROUP RECOVERY AFTERCARE COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE IS A SCOTTISH CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION NO SC043551

# Useful Telephone Numbers

Below is a list of contact telephone numbers that we hope you will find useful

**Advice and Response EDC**  
0141 775 1311

**Emergency Housing EDC**  
0141 578 2133 / 0141 578 8000

**Kirkintilloch Integrated Care Centre**  
0141 232 8200 /  
0141 304 7400 / 0141 355 2200

**EDC – The Hub**  
0800 901 057

**Housing Benefit**  
0800 901057

**Caledonia Housing, Kirkintilloch**  
0141 578 0260

**Police Station, Kirkintilloch**  
0141 532 4400 or 101

**Special Uplift**  
0300 1234515

**Cleansing and Recycling**  
0300 1234514

**Environmental Protection  
(including dog fouling, dog  
barking, antisocial noise)**  
0300 1234510

**Fire Station**  
0141 776 6263

**National Grid (formerly Transco)  
Gas Emergency**  
0800 111 999

**DWP (Cumbernauld)**  
01236 786500

**Local MP, Stuart McDonald MP**  
01236 453 969

**Local MSP, Rona Mackay**  
0141 776 1561

**Citizens Advice Bureau**  
0141 775 3223

**Crimestoppers Scotland**  
0800 555111

## How to contact us:

Hillhead Housing Association,  
2 Meiklehill Road, Hillhead,  
Kirkintilloch, G66 2LA

**Please refer to Direct Dial Numbers for  
all staff on enclosed Staff Contact List**

Email: [admin@hillheadhousing.org](mailto:admin@hillheadhousing.org)

Web: [www.hillheadhousing.org](http://www.hillheadhousing.org)

Free Phone Number: 0800 0523 188

Tel: 0141 578 0200 • Fax: 0141 578 4817

Text Number: 07491 163429

**KEEP US  
UP TO DATE!**

Please remember to let us know of any changes in your circumstances, for example change of name, change of number in household etc.



## OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY REPAIRS CONTACT NUMBERS:

(Gas Heating repairs–James Frew Ltd)	<b>01294 468 113</b>
--------------------------------------	----------------------

(all other repairs–Rodgers & Johnston)	<b>0800 999 2520</b>
--	----------------------

For tenants of new build properties built within 1 year call NPA	<b>0345 6016 084</b>
--	----------------------

## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS - OFFICE HOURS

Our office will be closed on the following dates:

- Friday 25 September – Monday 28 September

Please let us know if you require any information within this newsletter in larger print, Braille, cd/tape or in another language.