

Building on progress for a brighter Hillhead

A RECOGNISED SCOTTISH CHARITY SCO29998

# HILLHEAD IN FULL BLOOM!

Our staff have been out and about in the estate recently and have chosen 3 worthy winners of this year's garden competition. The winning tenants were awarded vouchers to spend at **Caulders Garden Centre** vouchers which we hope will come in handy when continuing to look after their spectacular gardens.

While staff agreed that these gardens had caught their eyes the most this year, it was great to see a number of other lovely gardens throughout the area. We welcome nominations for any green fingered tenants you think we should consider next year when it is competition time again.

Many congratulations to the winners!



Jane Wylie, Lammermoor Road receives her vouchers from our Estate Coordinator Diane Bridges



Mr & Mrs Warren's garden in Meiklehill Avenue



Angela Scott-Liddle, Abbotsford Road receives her vouchers from Diane

## Who lives in your house?

There has been a lot of change over the past few years due to COVID and many people's lives have changed because of this. Some families have seen their children move out and perhaps get a place of their own or head to college and university. Others may have experienced relationship breakdowns or new relationships or maybe had a baby.

If people are moving in or out of their homes we need to know in order that anyone living in a property can be classed as a resident or removed if they have left.

It is important that your household details are kept as up to date as possible as this can affect all manner of things including applying for a joint tenancy and assignments, as both require that you have lived in the house for at least 12 months for any request to be granted. Therefore if we have not been notified that you are living in the property as your principal/only home you need to let us know.

It can also affect you being re-housed via the housing list if children or other family have moved in or out - you may be due more or less points based on your circumstances.

If you want to update us with changes - or maybe you just want to check your household details are correct please contact your Housing Officer and they will be happy to check for you.

## Responsible dog owners

**We have been receiving an increase in the number of complaints related to dogs owned by our residents.**

If you have a dog(s) it is important that you have sought permission from the Association. You are responsible for your pet's behaviour and must ensure that it does not:

- Foul or cause damage to your house or any other houses, or to gardens, footpaths or common closes and other common areas
- Cause a noise nuisance for others in the surrounding area
- Behave in a manner likely to cause fear or alarm to others

Failure to adhere to the rules could mean that permission to keep your pet is removed.



## Ants



**We are once again coming to the time of year when garden ants become a real nuisance and are difficult to get rid of. Please remember that the Association unfortunately does not carry out treatments for garden ants. Here is some information which may assist you to deal with the problem:**

- Although they live outdoors, they can find their way into homes in large numbers through small gaps in brickwork, at windows and doors in their search for food.
- They search for sweet foods so your first control measure must be to ensure that you are not accidentally encouraging them - even a small spill of a soft drink would be a feast to a horde of ants.

### Treatment:

You can carry out treatment against ants yourself, which needs to be thorough.

- Apply a residual insecticide for crawling insects. You will be able to buy these at many DIY supermarkets and garden centres.
- Apply it to the entrance to the nest and wherever ants can enter your home.
- Inside your house you should apply the insecticide around the sink unit, skirting boards, around doors and window frames.
- You are trying to create a band of insecticide which ants must cross to get into your home.

To ensure you get rid of the problem you will need to find their nest. Follow any ant trails and look for small entrance holes in the ground surrounded by small piles of fine earth. Once you have found the nest follow the instructions that come with the pesticide about dealing with ants' nests. Please read the label and follow the instructions on the pesticide you chose.



# Ending your Tenancy



**We have noticed that there has been an increase in tenancies ending which have not been terminated in the proper manner.**

Your tenancy agreement can be ended in several ways with the Association; however, this is not being done.

You **MUST** give us at least twenty-eight days' notice. You can do this by written agreement, but you must not accept another tenancy without letting us know that you are intending to terminate our property.

If you fail to do this, you are still liable to cover the rent costs from 28 days from the date that we are notified that you are terminating the tenancy.

## WELFARE RIGHTS SERVICE GAINS NATIONAL ADVICE STANDARDS RE-ACCREDITATION

**The Association has successfully gained National Standards reaccreditation for the provision of Information and Advice for our welfare rights service and income maximisation services. Our initial accreditation was awarded in December 2018 so it is great to see our service externally validated once again.**

The Scottish Legal Aid Board on behalf of the Scottish Government conducted a review of the Association as part of the reaccreditation process as defined in the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers.

Hillhead Housing Association has been providing a welfare rights service since 2005 and in 2015 expanded its service with the support of Big Lottery Funding. A review of the service in 2020 identified a need to expand our service and we appointed an Income Maximisation Officer to support the breadth of the service that we provide. Since the service started over

20 years ago, we have successfully achieved additional financial client gains of **£7,680,866.59** for our tenants. In the last year alone, we have supported 511 tenants and achieved financial gains of **£707,412.24** for them.

During the last 2 years our services have centred on providing support through the pandemic and we are now focussing our efforts on supporting tenants through the emergent cost of living and energy crises.

Photographed here with our National Standards Certificate is Morag Bisset, Welfare Rights Officer and Heather Montgomery, Income Maximisation Assistant.



# Handy Tips Before Reporting Repairs

## No power?

Open the cover on your consumer unit (usually next to the meter in the hall cupboard) and check that the trip switches are at the ON position.

If the power goes on again, it is likely to be caused by a faulty appliance. Unplug all appliances, reset the trip switch, and plug the appliances in one at a time until the switch trips again. You will then know which is the problem appliance.

Remember a total loss of power may be a power cut so check whether your neighbours have lost power as well and if this is the case contact Scottish Power on **0800 092 9290**.



## Blocked toilet?

If the bowl is already full, remove some of the water into a bucket first. Use a plunger or toilet brush wrapped in a plastic bag. Push to the bottom of the pan and pump up and down vigorously about a dozen times. This creates a vacuum that may shift the blockage.



# Gas Safety Annual Check

**The Association has a legal responsibility to ensure that all our properties which contain a gas appliance or pipework, are serviced on an annual basis. This is required by law and is for the safety of both the tenant and their neighbours.**



When you receive an appointment letter it is essential that you check this date is suitable for you to give our contractor James Frew access to your property. If the

appointment is inconvenient, please call our Property Services Assistant Michele Stirling on 0141776 8625 to arrange an alternative appointment.

Where we have taken reasonable steps to gain access to your property and have failed to do so, we will take the appropriate measures to potentially force access to your home or cap the gas supply. If we are required to forced access to your property you will be liable for all costs associated with the required works.

Our gas contractor is James Frew – Gas Sure and can be contacted on 01294468113.

Following a gas safety check your property may be selected to be audited by our contractor Argon Technical, who will contact you by letter to advise of an appointment.

## FIRE SAFETY VISITS

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service are calling on communities to help prevent deaths in house fires – by making a 5 minute phone call to arrange a free home safety fire visit. This visit will help you sort out a fire escape plan in the event of a fire. If you decide that you would like a visit, please contact the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service via one of the options on the right.



# TEST IT TUESDAY

**We provide smoke alarms in all our houses, and they are also subject to annual checks. However, you should test these weekly to make sure that they are always working. (TEST IT TUESDAY) If there appears to be a fault, you should report this to our Property Services Team.**

**Remember it is important to keep the smoke alarm in working order – it could save your life.**

Please also ensure that you do not cover up your smoke detectors at any time. If there is a fire and your detector is covered then the alarm will not always be effective.

By 1 Feb 2022, all homes in Scotland were required to have a minimum number of smoke alarms under changes made to the

Housing (Scotland) Act in the wake of the Grenfell Tower blaze and Hillhead Housing Association welcomes this initiative to improve fire safety for our tenants.

The new requirements mean that we will install a smoke alarm in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes (living room), a smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings and a heat alarm in every kitchen. However, we have also taken steps to ensure that there is minimum disruption to existing decoration in properties by insisting that all alarms are ceiling mounted and interlinked using RF (radio frequency) and therefore, there



will be no need to expose electric cables or damage to papering or painting. The sealed long-life battery in these units should last for a minimum of 10 years.

If you feel your home is not up to the new standard or want advice on how to test the alarms, please contact the office for advice or to arrange an inspection

## 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

# Landscape Maintenance Contract

The Association recently appointed Lawnbusters as our new landscape contractor for the remainder of the growing season. The contract involves grass cutting at open spaces and private gardens as well as trimming and cutting back overgrown hedges in the area. If your garden is cut by the contractor, can you please ensure that all areas are free from dog fouling, garden furniture and toys.



## Estate Management

Hillhead Housing Association encourages tenants or residents to report any health and safety issues they notice throughout the common areas within the estate and backcourts. Diane, our Estate Co-ordinator, carries out regular inspections and records and monitors any issues found in the area. The purpose of these inspections is to check the condition of closes and gardens, communal and open areas, dumping of rubbish/household items, fly tipping, graffiti, identifying any trip hazards, and playpark inspections.



## Close cleaning and shared gardens

All tenants and residents living in closes should take their turn maintaining their own section of garden as well as cleaning the close or at least their own area of close which includes doors, walls, floors, bannisters and windows. As an association tenant, this is part of your tenancy agreement.

In the coming weeks Diane will be engaging with residents to discuss how we can all help keep our shared spaces in a manageable condition.



# Estate Walk Round

Prior to coronavirus restrictions, we regularly carried out Estate Walk Rounds, where residents accompanied staff, visiting various areas of the estate and providing ideas for projects, improvements, maintenance and identifying hot spot areas where persistent fly tipping or litter was found.

Various community initiatives have been carried out as a result of feedback from Estate Inspections including a community litter pick.

Now that restrictions have eased, we are planning to commence our Estate Walk Round once again - this is likely to be around late September. If you are interested in being involved, please contact Diane on 0141 578 0200.



## RIGHT BIN? PUT IT IN

### GENERAL WASTE

All household waste (rubbish) that cannot be recycled.



### PAPER AND CARDBOARD

- Paper
- Newspaper
- Cardboard
- Junk Mail
- Magazines
- Catalogues
- Telephone Directories



### PLASTIC, GLASS AND CANS



- Glass jars
- Glass bottles
- Aerosol cans
- Food tins
- Drink cans
- Tin foil
- Plastic bags
- Plastic bottles
- Plastic trays
- Plastic pots
- Plastic tubs



### GARDEN WASTE

- Flowers
- Plants
- Grass cuttings
- Shrub/Hedge clippings
- Leaves
- Weeds (not invasive plants like Japanese Knotweed)
- Twigs/Branches
- Straw or animal bedding

### FOOD WASTE

- ALL food waste
- Cooked food
- Raw food
- Bones
- Shells
- No liquids



# HOW WELL ARE WE DOING?

The tables below let you see how we are performing against some key activities during the period 1 April to 30 June 2022

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

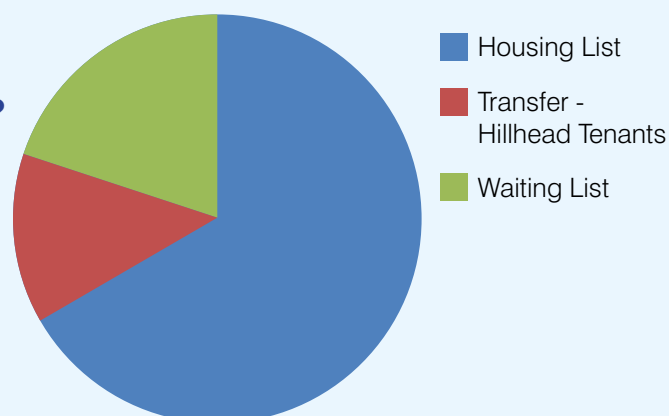
### CURRENT TENANT RENT ARREARS

Month	Tenant Arrears	Level of Arrears
April	£110,075.19	2.76%
May	£107,775.88	2.70%
June	£107,590.26	2.70%

### ALLOCATIONS

Month	No. of Lets
April	4
May	4
June	7

### WHO WERE PROPERTIES ALLOCATED TO?



### REPAIRS RESPONSE TIMES (excludes gas servicing)

Category/Month	% Completed within time scales		
	April	May	June
Emergency (24hours)	94.11%	100%	92.85%
Urgent ( 3 days)	97.82%	93.33%	100%
Routine (10 days)	98.57%	95.34%	100%
Voids (7 days)	100%	80.00%	88.24%
All Repairs - HHA 2000	97.94%	94.48%	97.77%



## HOW WE COMPARE TO OTHER HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

We compare our performance against those of other housing association members of Scotland's Housing Networks every quarter.

The table below lets you see how we are performing against the average of this group at the end of June 2022

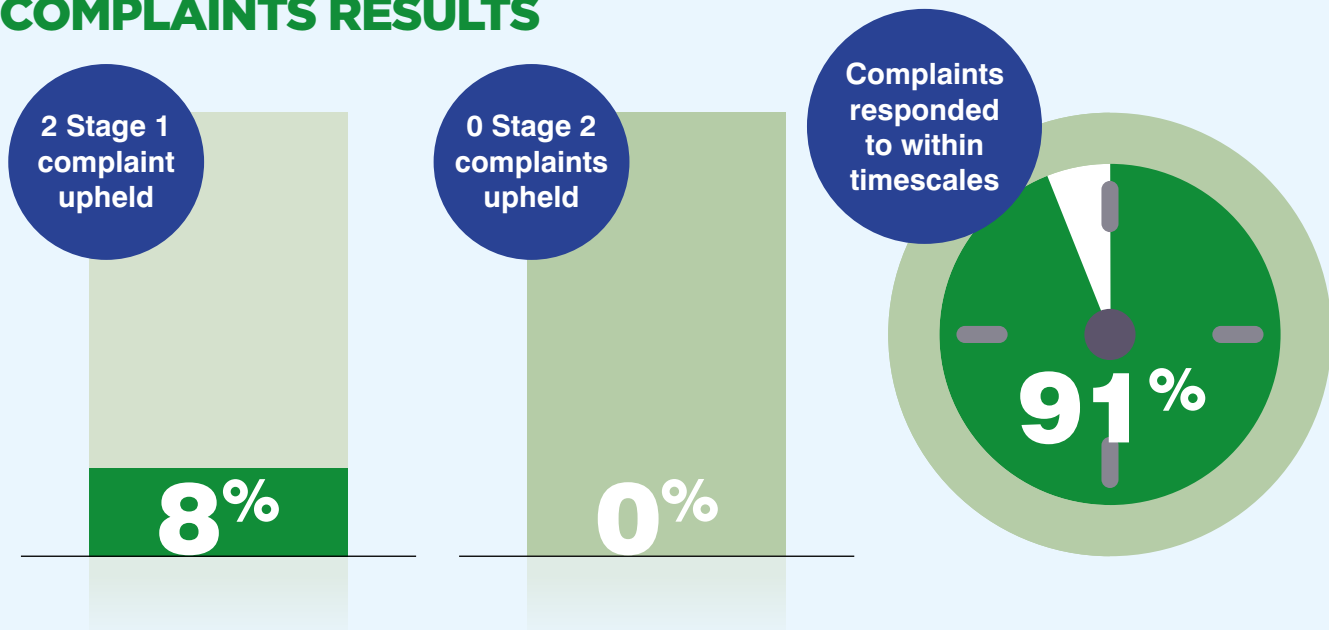
Performance Area	Hillhead	Scotland Housing Network
Current Tenant Rent Arrears	2.70%	3.38%
Rent Loss for empty houses/flats	0.98%	0.91%
Average time taken to re-let a house	22 days	35.93 days
Average number of days to complete non emergency repairs	3.16 days	6.34 days

# COMPLAINTS

Between 1 April and 31 June 2022, the Association received 10 Stage 1 complaints and 1 Stage 2 complaint.

At the time of writing the report the Stage 2 complaint was still being investigated, therefore it has yet to be confirmed whether it will be upheld.

## COMPLAINTS RESULTS



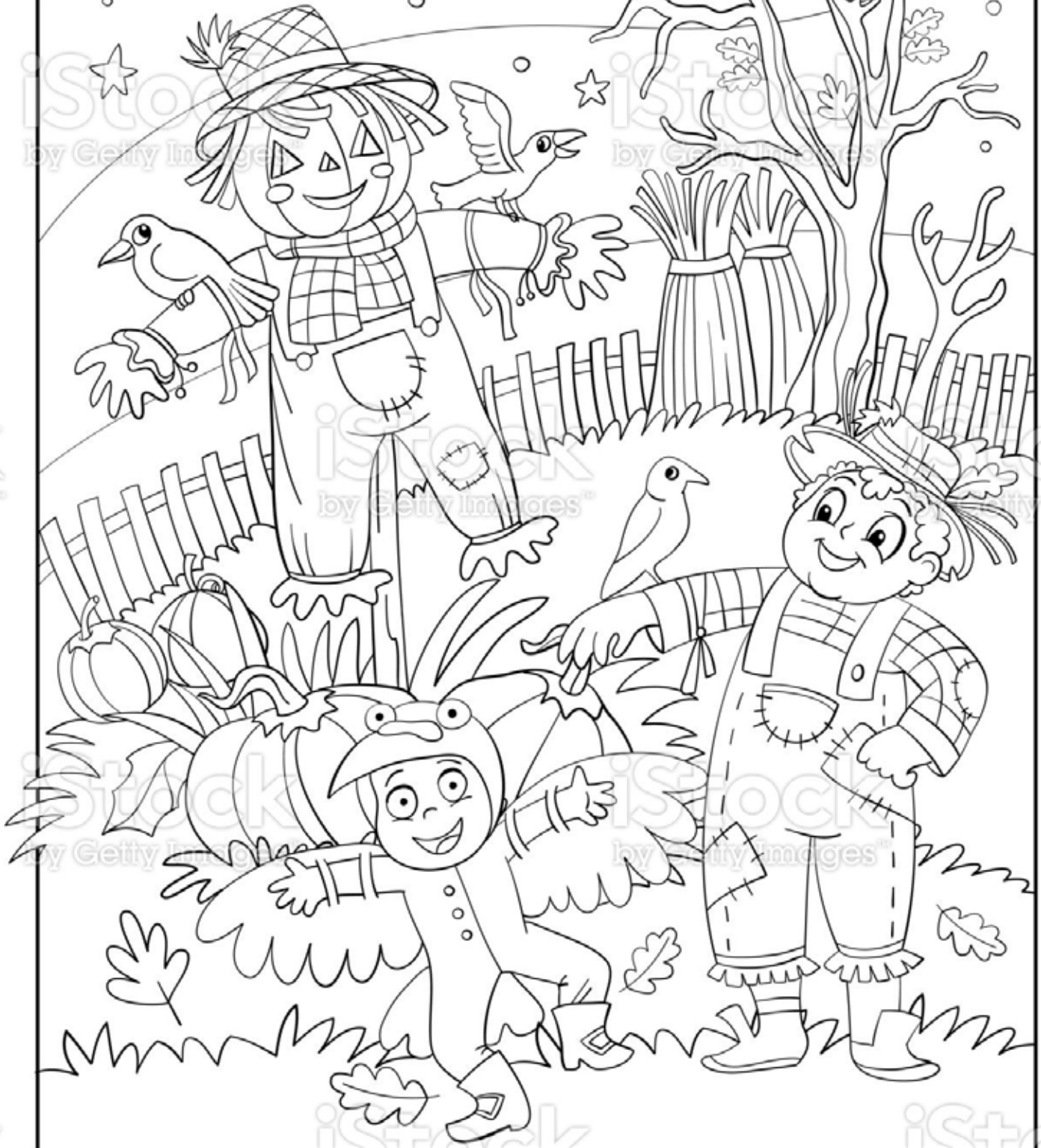
## COMPLAINTS BY NATURE OF COMPLAINT

Housing Quality & Maintenance	7
Access to Housing and Support	1
Customer / Landlord Relationship	0
Getting good value from rents & service charges	1
Neighbourhood and community	2
Complaints relating to equalities	0

## ACTION TAKEN TO IMPROVE SERVICES

Both of the complaints upheld were in relation to the landscape maintenance contract. The Association now has another contractor in place who is working through the contract and any backlog.

# JUST FOR FUN

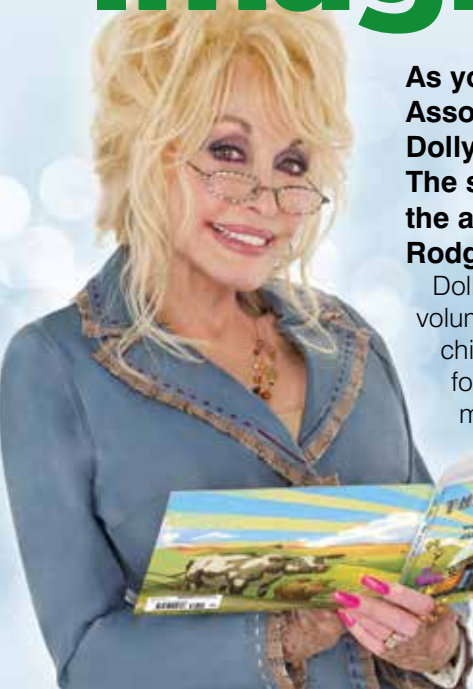


# Dolly Parton

R&J Ltd



# Imagination Library



**As you may be aware, the Association is registered with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. The scheme is being sponsored by the association repairs contractor Rodgers & Johnston Ltd.**

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a 60 volume set of books beginning with the children's classic *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* for children aged 0-5 years old. Each month a new, carefully selected book will arrive by mail in your child's name and be delivered directly to your home. Best of all it is free. There is no cost or

obligation to your family.

All children under the age of five and are Hillhead Housing Association tenants are eligible to apply. A parent or guardian should contact the association and request a registration form, this should be complete returned to Hillhead Housing Association.

Once the association receives the completed registration form we will post you the first welcome book. Six to eight weeks after your registration form has been received, books will begin arriving from the Imagination Library at your home and will continue until your child turns five or you move out of the area.

For more information, please visit [imaginationlibrary.com](http://imaginationlibrary.com) or contact Marie Savage on 0141 776 8623.

**Never registered  
to vote or  
recently moved?**

You need to be registered to vote in elections.

Register now at:  
[gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://gov.uk/register-to-vote)

**YOUR VOTE MATTERS**

**DON'T LOSE IT**



## Customer conduct

Unfortunately over the last few months we have experienced a few instances where our staff have been on the receiving end of abusive or challenging behaviour. Our staff are here to help you as much as they possibly can and they should be able to come to work and expect to be treated with dignity and respect by our customers. Please do not shout, use offensive language or adopt an aggressive manner when you have contact with our staff. We will consider Police or legal action if our staff feel threatened or intimidated. **Thank you.**



# 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

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

Our phone lines are open between 9.00AM  
and 12.30PM and from 1.30PM to 5PM.

**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>

### PUBLIC HOLIDAYS - OFFICE HOURS

Our office will be closed on the following dates:

Friday 23 September & Monday 26 September

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