

March 2008



Issue Number

31

ChitChat

Current Housing Information To Clydebank Housing Association Tenants

Radnor Park Tenants asked to 'Clear Out!'

Tenants dump 15 tonnes of rubbish

In partnership with Radnor Park Multis Tenants and Residents Association and West Dunbartonshire Council Waste Services Section, we arranged two Community Clear Out Days!

Over the two days, on 24 and 31 January, the Council provided very large walk-in skips (containers) to four locations, worth approx. £1,000, and we hired handymen and had six staff on site to provide assistance to tenants.

Everything that was put into the containers was sorted and lots of items were recycled by the Waste Services Section, so tenants did their bit for the environment too!

We're sure all involved in the clear out days will agree they were a great success, with 8½ containers being filled with 15 tonnes of rubbish.

The tenants' commitment to the days and the positive feedback received has been truly overwhelming.



Staff and handymen assist tenants



8.50am...

The containers soon fill up!



Tenants brave the bad weather!



...9.20am!



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- Rent increase figure agreed Page 6
- Find out about our new homes for rent Page 8
- Major repairs update Page 9
- Unusual competition for the over 25's... Page 10



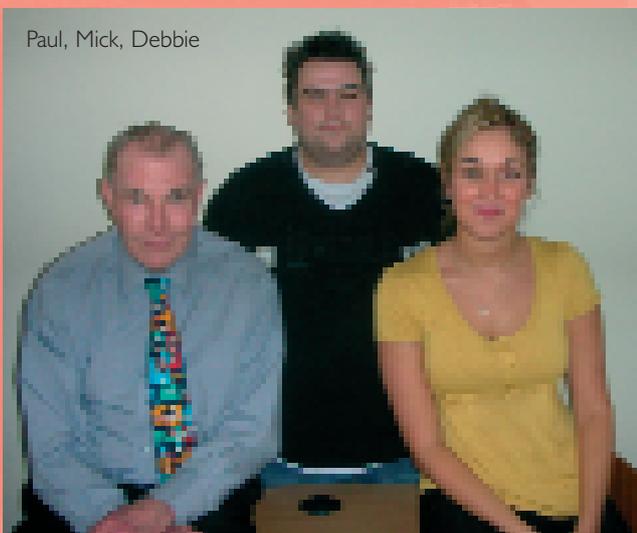
Introducing our New Staff

Paul Holmes, Whitecrook Regeneration Centre Manager, joined us in December. Paul was previously a Community Partnership manager with a Glasgow local economic and social regeneration agency and will complete the development of the Whitecrook Regeneration Centre (see pages 4 and 5 for more info).

Mick McNally, Whitecrook Regeneration Centre Project Worker, joined us in January. Mick will assist Paul in the final stages of the development of the Whitecrook Regeneration Centre.

Debbie Taylor, Housing Assistant, joined us in January for one year to assist our Housing Management section. Debbie will look after the day-to-day housing management needs of about half of our 1,026 tenants.

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Paul, Mick, Debbie

Another Staff Member Qualifies

After 6 months of study, Housing Assistant Nicola Nolan, has become the fourth staff member to become 'Homepoint' qualified to Level 2. She has proven that she can provide detailed advice on a wide range of housing issues.

We now have 8 staff trained in the National Homepoint Standards; four to Level 2; four to Level 1.

Our commitment to these Standards shows that we are constantly striving to provide you with the best quality of information and advice.



From left to right are 6 of our 8 Homepoint qualified staff: Joe, Nicola, Catherine, Joan, Ali and Michael



Spotlight on the Committee

In previous newsletters, we've put a 'spotlight' on some of our Management Committee members. Now it's Tom Winter's turn! We ask Tom, from Radnor Park, some questions about his role on the committee and why he got involved...

Why did you become a committee member?

TW: I had knowledge of housing issues from my experience with a tenants association and the previous landlord, Scottish Homes (formerly Scottish Special HA), so I felt this was a natural follow on.

What is the Management Committee's role in Clydebank Housing Association?

TW: Working with staff to obtain the best conditions for the tenants. The Management Committee makes all the major decisions about the Association, after taking advice from staff.

What is your role within the Committee?

TW: I'm a member of the Management Committee and two sub-committees. The Housing Management and Maintenance Sub Committee, which meets monthly, and the Finance and Staffing Sub Committee, which meets every three months.

What do you find most rewarding about being a Committee Member?

TW: Seeing the Association tackle the changing circumstances it faces all the time.

What's been the highlight for you of the past 4 years?

TW: The annual Tenant Conferences in the Town Hall.

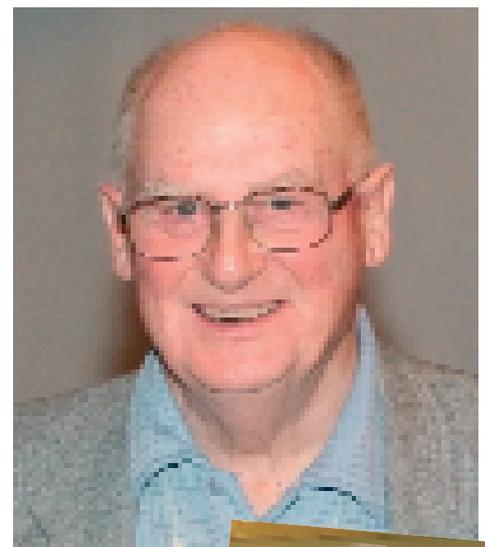
What would you say to a resident who's considering joining the Committee?

TW: It can be time consuming but it's rewarding! At the end of the day, it's your Association so get involved! Training is provided and expenses are paid, such as childcare costs.

We're always looking for new Committee Members to join the Management Committee. We're always keen to recruit people of a variety of ages and skills, and we can provide support in the following ways: training, childcare costs, travel costs and

Committee members are all local volunteers who make all the important decisions about what we should be doing and how we should be doing it and they employ staff to act on these decisions and carry out our day-to-day work.

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Tom enjoys bowling in his spare time



Tom has a well deserved cuppa!

For more information, give our Director, Fiona Webster, a call at the office on 0141 941 1044.

ChitChat

Wider Role Update

Whitecrook
Regeneration
Centre Funders:

ADAPT

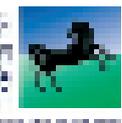
**Active Health
for older
people**



4



DATA Glasgow 15



WIP
Wider Role Strategy
Evaluation and Funding Plan



clydebank housing association

What is Wider Role?

Wider role is any activity that we undertake which is not related to our core housing functions which include providing and maintaining houses. The aim of our wider role is to improve the economic, social and environmental circumstances of our local areas.

We have a Wider Role Strategy, Evaluation and Funding Plan.

This contains information from a variety of sources to make sure that the wider role activities we carry out can benefit our community.

If you have any queries on wider role, contact Sinéad or Fiona Webster at the office. Read on for more on our current wider role activity.

Whitecrook Regeneration Centre

Clydebank Housing Association has taken over full responsibility of Centre

Construction of the long awaited £2.5 million Regeneration Centre at Braes Avenue, Whitecrook nears completion. Building of the centre which will provide a comprehensive range of services and activities for the residents of Whitecrook and the wider Clydebank area is due to finish by the end of March with the centre opening in mid to late April.

Clydebank Housing Association has taken over full responsibility for completing the centre and for its immediate and long term future management at the request of the Scottish Government and some major funders.

The state of the art centre which hopefully heralds the start of the longer term regeneration of Whitecrook is designed to improve the quality of life not just for Whitecrook's 5,000 plus residents but for those from the surrounding areas.

Details of the services and activities, which will be provided by a number of organisations, are being finalised but will include:

- **Childcare** - 12 places for 0 - 4 year olds, together with out of school and holiday care/play activities for up to forty 5 - 11 year olds.
- **Basic and intermediate computing and related IT skills training** in such areas as digital photography, video and music production, internet broadcasting, desktop publishing etc. along with free internet and wireless broadband access.
- Assistance in **helping people to find work**, enhance the skills of those already in work, advise and support people who want to start their own business or become self employed.



Clydebank
Social Economy Centre

Providing quality, inclusive accommodation for social economy, voluntary sector and community businesses



...NEWS FLASH!
SPACE AVAILABLE
Contact us now!

63 Kilbowie Road,
Clydebank G81 1BL
T: 0141 952 6307
E: heather@clydebank-ha.org.uk
or sam@clydebank-ha.org.uk

Clydebank Social Economy Centre is owned and managed by Clydebank Housing Association Ltd.

Electric Car Hire Scheme Given Green Light!



An example of the Mega City electric cars, which we've ordered in silver, from the Nice Car Company.

With funding of £37,000 from Communities Scotland, we have now purchased 3 electric cars for our tenants to hire!

This innovative and exciting car hire scheme for tenants will hopefully be operational by June 2008.

Management of the scheme is currently being finalised and will be influenced by results from the large scale tenant consultation exercise carried out last year.

- A range of programmes and activities designed to **increase self confidence**, communication, literacy and numeracy skills.
- Programmes, courses and activities aimed at meeting the specific needs of lone parents, women returners and **people who are unemployed** due to longer term illness or disability.
- Activities designed by and **meeting the needs of young people**.
- A **community café** providing meals and refreshments, cookery classes and low cost fruit and vegetables.
- **Meeting space** and resources for community groups and voluntary organisations.
- **Volunteering opportunities** and a wide range of other services which meet the needs of the wider population.

Whitecrook Regeneration Centre is another example in our involvement in Wider Role activities. It follows the establishment of the Clydebank Social Economy Centre in Kilbowie Road and the soon to be launched electric car hire scheme for tenants (see above for more details).

Commenting on the forthcoming opening of the centre, Fiona Webster, Director, said,

"This fantastic building will show everyone that Whitecrook has potential. We hope that its completion will mark the first step towards a massive regeneration of Whitecrook!"



The Centre nears completion



Housing Management Update

Performance so far this year

The table below shows our performance so far for the financial year April 2007 to March 2008 in some of our most important Housing Management functions, such as letting a property and arrears.

We are now ten months into our financial year (figures reported are up to the end of January 2008), and as can be seen we continue to operate within our targets and are performing at a high level in most areas. This said we are always trying to find ways to continually improve, as well as ensure that the services we offer provide maximum benefit and value for money to our tenants and customers alike.

6 Further performance information will be published in future newsletters.

Indicator	Performance 1 April 2007 - 31 January 2008	Year end Target 2007 - 2008
Maximum rent loss on vacant properties	0.49% of annual rental income to date	0.9%
Non-technical arrears (current tenants as % of rent receivable)	1.12%	1.2%
Number of calendar days to let a property	21.4	25 days
Processing of housing application forms	8.9 days	25 calendar days
Carrying out new tenant visits	87% visited within timescale	Within 4-8 weeks of tenant moving in
Investigating neighbour complaints	Cat A 100% within timescale Cat B 80% within timescale* Cat C 84% within timescale*	Cat A (Extreme) 2 working days Cat B (Serious) 10 working days Cat C (Dispute) 15 working days

* All of the complaints outwith timescale were due to us waiting on further information, for example from tenants, the Police or other organisations.

Annual Rent Increase and Rent Policy 2008-2009

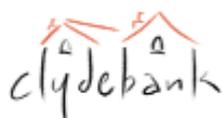
We consulted tenants on these policies in our September and December 2007 newsletters and at our Tenant Conference in October.

These articles highlighted the criteria for setting the rent and service charges for the forthcoming financial year (April 2008 - March 2009). The December rate of inflation (RPI) was announced at 4%. Our Management Committee agreed to increase the rent by the RPI rate plus 1%, meaning a 5% rent increase from 28 March 2008 across all of our stock. This is broadly in line with other housing associations in the area, and is the minimum increase we could impose without reducing resources in other areas, such as major repairs.

Service Charges

We are delighted to confirm a reduction in service charges for our core stock tenants for the next financial year. Last year core stock tenants were charged £60.54 for common electricity and landscaping services for the year. We have been able to reduce the service charge to £57.82 per annum. For those tenants who have common area window cleaning charge this will go up slightly to £18.18 per annum, from the £17.92 charged this year.

Please contact Joe Farrell, our Senior Housing Officer, for any further information on the above.



New Management Software System

Your patience will be appreciated

At the end of April, we will be upgrading our computer system which deals with all our housing management and maintenance functions, such as rents and repairs.

We aim to do this with minimal disruption to you, however, there may be around three days when we'll only be able to give you limited information on rent balances, waiting list positions, repairs progress and so on. Please bear this in mind if making any enquiries during this period. We thank you in advance for your patience.

How to Apply for a House

Our waiting list is open to everyone aged 16 and over. You may wish to seek a transfer from your current address or know someone who is interested in applying to us for housing. Application forms are available direct from our office reception or give us a phone and we'll post a form out to you. We are also able to e-mail an application form, however in this instance, you will have to print the form off and post or hand it in to us. This is so the required declaration can be signed and dated. For any further information on making an application for housing simply contact a member of our Housing Management section.

No Dumping!

We take this opportunity to ask the very small minority of residents who dump in common areas and private land to stop this and respect their community. Recent estate management inspections have shown this is happening. If during the course of inspections the culprits are identified, all information will be passed to the relevant authorities and action taken accordingly.

Anyone witnessing dumping can call the 'Dumb Dumpers' hotline on 08452 30 40 90.

Rubbish Chutes at Radnor Multi Stories

A reminder to all our Radnor Park residents to take care when disposing of items down the rubbish chutes. In the last few months we have had several reports of blockages caused by misuse of the bin chutes. The chutes are not suitable for the disposal of bulk items. If in doubt about how to dispose of any bulk items please contact a caretaker or our office.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Make sure you get all the money and help you're entitled to with West Dunbartonshire Council's Welfare Rights/Money Advice Service



It's a free and confidential service available to all residents and their families. The Unit is located in Dumbarton but residents can receive help from the three main social work offices in Clydebank, Dumbarton and Alexandria.

Experienced Welfare Rights Officers and Information Workers can provide you with information on your benefit entitlement and assist you to make an informed choice. We can help you to complete forms in your own home if you are unable to come along to a local office. Assistance to appeal unfavourable decisions is also provided and a Welfare Rights Officer will assist you and accompany you to an appeal.

If you would like to check that you are receiving your full entitlement to benefits call our freephone helpline on 0800 980 90 70
Last year our Welfare Rights/Money Advice Service assisted over 5,000 people to claim 'In and Out' of work benefits of £6.5 million pounds!

Welfare Rights/Money Advice Service
6/14 Bridge Street, DUMBARTON G82 1NT

Cart Street - Our Next New Build Development for Rent!

In partnership with Clydebank Re-built, we are currently developing proposals for our first riverside development. This exciting, high-profile development will be significantly located at the beginning of the Quayside Approach, immediately opposite the new Clydebank College. So far, plans for the 40 flats include a mix of one and two bedroom apartments, each enjoying west or south west facing aspects, generously proportioned balconies with glass curtain walling and a number of energy saving features. An impression of what the development may look like is pictured below.



Sharon Keenan, Deputy Director, said, *“We are delighted to be providing these 40 socially rented flats for our waiting list applicants who are in housing need and I’m sure they will satisfy in terms of standards, design and location”.*

Plans for the £5m project, designed by Elder & Canon Architects, are expected to receive tender approval in June this year and completion is anticipated in September 2009. The project will be funded by Communities Scotland. Clydebank Re-built, who are also partially funding the scheme, has been appointed to develop the project, on our behalf.



Plans for the project recently featured in the Clydebank Re-built exhibition in Clydebank Shopping Centre during February. Pictured right is Fiona Webster, Director, browsing our feature at the exhibition.

Homestake



Please see our newsletter insert for up to date information on our Homestake scheme for low cost home ownership at Dean Court, Clydebank.



Fiona Webster, Director

Major Repairs

Tenders have been received for the following contracts and it is hoped that the works will commence shortly.

- Renewal of lifts at Lusset View, Radnor Park
- Renewal of central heating systems at Bell Street, McGregor Street, White Street, East Barns Street, Montrose Street, Cumbrae Court and Bannerman Place (excluding nos. 15-27)
- Renewal of door entry system at Jean Armour Drive
- Renewal of kitchens at Attlee Place and Livingstone Street

The heating systems at 161-173 Dumbarton Road are also due for renewal and we will be consulting with these tenants soon regarding the type of system to be installed.

In the coming financial year, starting in April 2008, we will also be carrying out the following major repairs:

- Renewal of lifts at 6 blocks of multi-storey flats at Radnor Park
- Renewal of weather-stripping to flat entrance doors and loft insulation at our tenemental properties



Renewal of heating systems



Renewal of weather stripping and loft insulation

Stock Condition Survey

We carry out our major repairs programme in accordance with a plan which is based on the condition of our properties over a 30 year period. Every 5 years we carry out a sample survey of all house types to find out if this 30 year plan needs to be updated. It's been 5 years since the last survey, so we'll be carrying out another stock condition survey in the coming financial year.

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Did you know...

... that if you have double glazing installed you are already saving half a tonne of CO₂ each year.

From <http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk>

Digital TV Upgrade

The upgrade of the communal TV aerials to digital has now been completed at the multi-storey flats, Crown Avenue and 15-27 Bannerman Place.

Our contractor has been unable to complete the works at the tenemental properties due to access problems. The current communal systems will be switched off before the end of March so we will be contacting tenants again to arrange suitable access arrangements.

Wee Chitchat For 8-15 year olds only!

Many thanks to all who completed our recycling related question. The slip of  **Bethany Lynch** of central Clydebank, was picked from all correct entries. Lucky Bethany received two tickets to the X Factor Live Tour at the SECC in February!

For your chance to see the film of your choice on the big screen, simply complete and return the cut-off slip below by Friday 11 April 2008.

The first two correct entries picked at the closing date will each win £15 of vouchers for Empire Cinema in Clydebank.

Competition For Tenants, Sharing Owners and Owners



As December's issue was our 30th edition of ChitChat, we held a competition for all tenants, owners and sharing owners. Thanks to all those who entered.

Ms Brady of Linnvale was the lucky winner of two tickets for the Strictly Come Dancing tour at the SECC. Ms Brady answered our rent related question correctly. Her entry was then put into the draw and picked as a winner. Congratulations!

Now for a very unusual competition - be the first to drive our electric cars!

To be in with a chance to be the first to drive our electric hire cars (as detailed on page 5), simply complete and return the cut-off slip below by Friday 11 April 2008. We're also going to throw in five days of free electric car hire to the winner!

Cinema

Competition March 2008

Question: "How many flats will we have for rent in Cart Street?"

Answer: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Age: _____

Rules: you must live in the house you put down as your address.

Wee Chitchat

Electric Car Competition March 2008

Question: "How many electric cars has the Association purchased?"

Answer: _____

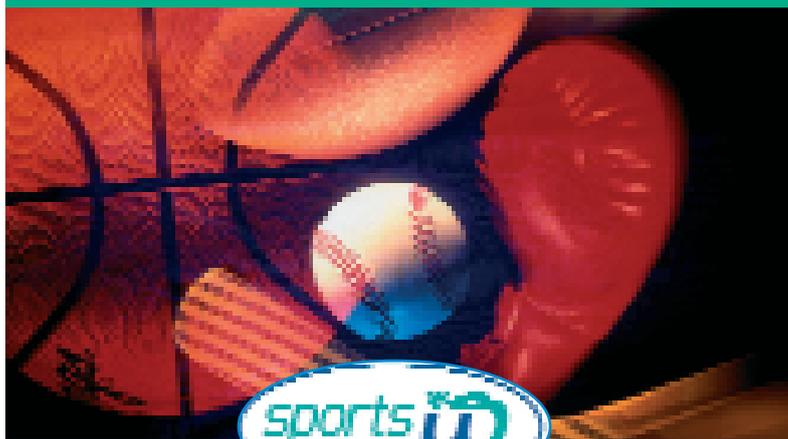
Name: _____

Address: _____

Rules: This competition is open to tenants, owners and sharing owners aged 25 or over. By entering you agree that you have a clean driving licence which you will be able to produce prior to using the car. You also agree to be featured in promotional material. Subject to further terms and conditions.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Get involved - sport and physical activity in your area



West Dunbartonshire Council Sports Development Unit is looking to develop opportunities for sport and physical activity across your local area. We aim to get people active and involved in different community activities, which can range from light exercise for beginners and recreational level, to more intense and competitive sporting opportunities.

We are looking to improve opportunities in your area by facilitating the development of clubs and sports coaches and volunteers. To do this we are looking to speak to local volunteers and train and support them through a Club and Coach Education Programme. Please go to <http://www.wdcweb.info/sportsdevelopment> for information on the courses and funding available.

If you are interested in developing yourself as a volunteer or coach or in setting up a club, please contact Pamela on

01389 753 557

Do you need information in a different way?

There are many of our residents who need information, such as letters and newsletters, in a different format. All information sent to these residents is sent automatically in the format of their choice, for example, in large print or on audio tape.



Please do not hesitate to contact Sinéad at the office if you would prefer information in Braille, large print, on audio tape, on computer disk or in any other language.

General housing information packs are available in many languages from our reception, including Polish, Chinese, Gaelic and Kurdish.

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Did you know...

- ... under-inflated tyres create more resistance when your car is moving.
- The engine has to work harder, more fuel is used and more CO2 emitted.
- Check and adjust your tyres regularly. Correctly inflated tyres are also safer and last longer. Check your car manual for correct tyre pressures.
- From <http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk>

March 2008

ChitChat

Clydebank Housing Association Emergency Numbers

Only to be used in
an emergency

Gas central heating emergencies
(including CHP breakdowns
in Radnor Park):

***0870 242 5037**

All other emergency repairs:
0845 6123 160

Emergency numbers are also
available on our website
and on our office
answering machine.



Cut Out and Keep

*Please note this is a new number

If you have a complaint...

... please contact us. We will try to resolve your complaint using our Complaints Procedure. Please ask us if you want a copy of this procedure. If we are not able to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction, you can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for advice. They deal with complaints about councils, housing associations, the National Health Service, the Scottish Executive and its agencies and departments, colleges and universities and most Scottish public authorities. They provide a free and impartial service.

Informal Complaints

Please also note that if you want your dissatisfaction noted but do not want to go through the formal complaints procedure, you can contact Sinéad Boyle at the office. She will take a note of your informal complaint, look into it and let you know the outcome. We still note the dissatisfaction in an informal complaints register. This helps us when updating our policies and procedures.

If you have a community alarm...

... from West Dunbartonshire Council you should contact Jim Slaven at the Council if any of your details change, such as your doctor or your keyholders. His number is 0141 951 6240.

Office Hours

Please note that the office will be closed on the following public holidays:

Friday 21 March and Monday 24 March 2008

Monday 5 May 2008

Friday 23 May and Monday 26 May 2008

The office will also be closed on Friday 9 May 2008
(Staff and Committee Training Day)

Our usual office opening hours are as follows:
Monday to Thursday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm and Friday 9.00 am to 4.00 pm

The office closes between 1.00 pm and 2.00 pm each day for lunch.

The office also closes on the first Wednesday morning of each month for staff training.

YOUR NEXT CHITCHAT WILL BE DELIVERED IN JUNE 2008



Please recycle this newsletter

To the best of our knowledge all of the information contained in this newsletter is correct at the time of going to print



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Registered in Scotland at the above address



If you need this newsletter in any other format please contact us.