



ChitChat

Funding Secured for Gym81

We have been awarded £83,206 from the Big Lottery Fund's Community Spaces programme to turn an open area of our regeneration centre in the heart of Whitecreek, Centre81, into a multi purpose gym and improve access to the nearby outdoor sports pitches.

The Community Spaces programme allows local people to get together and shape their neighbourhood by making better use of outdoor and indoor spaces.

Our project aims to improve the physical and mental health of residents through a range of innovative and exciting programmes added to which will now be a new indoor gym and new floodlighting on the adjacent sports pitches making them available for sporting activities all year round.

Sharon Keenan, our Depute Director, said, "We are absolutely delighted that The Big Lottery Fund has decided to fund our Gym81 project at Centre81. This funding will enable the local community to take part in sports and fitness activities in a comfortable, secure and familiar space, without feeling the pressure of being in a formal environment."

Sharon continued, "Thanks to everyone who returned our various surveys as these responses highlighted the desire and need for fitness activities whilst utilising the open spaces at Centre81. We are aiming to have the facilities up and running early in 2014."



This issue in pictures...

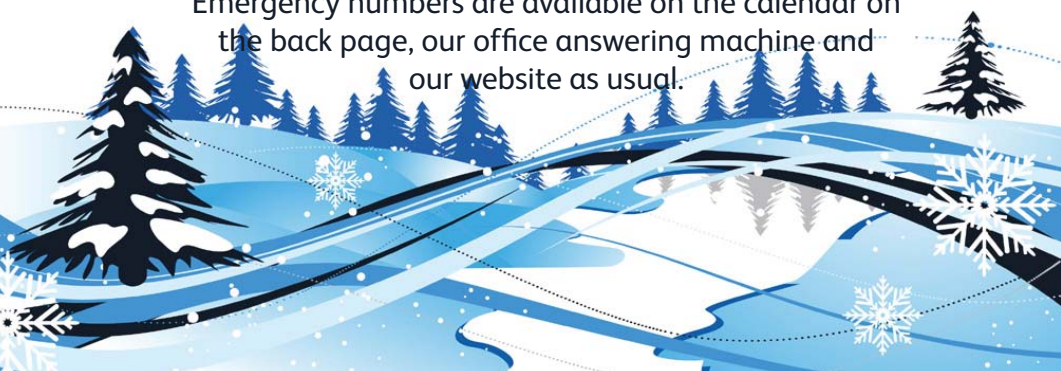


We wish all our tenants a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!

Festive Closure

Our office will close on Tuesday 24 December 2013 at 12.30pm and re-open on Monday 6 January 2014 at 9.00am.

Emergency numbers are available on the calendar on the back page, our office answering machine and our website as usual.



NEWS

Staff & Committee

Long Service Awards

We wish to congratulate our colleagues **Fiona White** (pictured right) and **Janet Dunphy** (below), who both work in the Finance and Admin section, on their long service awards.



In November, Fiona celebrated her 20 years of service with the Association and Janet celebrated her 25 years of service in December. We would like to thank them both for their hard work and loyalty over the years.

Director Fiona presents Janet with a gift



Jack Devlin

We are delighted that **Jack** was successful in securing the position of Maintenance Assistant.



Jack is already proving to be a valuable asset to the maintenance team.

Drew McDougall

We are delighted to welcome **Drew** who recently joined the Association in the role of Clerical Assistant.



Drew will be based at the reception area of our Kilbowie Road office and he looks forward to meeting our many customers.

Fiona Campbell

We are delighted to welcome **Fiona** as our new part time temporary Housing Officer. Fiona's duties will include rent arrears, welfare reform issues, allocation of houses and dealing with neighbour disputes and estate management issues. Fiona has a vast experience in Housing Management and will be an excellent addition to our team.



New voluntary Management Committee member

Tony Watson joined us in September. Tony said, "I have been a solicitor for over 20 years in private practice with a wide range of experience in corporate and finance transactions, including acting for housing associations. I believe that my experience will allow me to be of assistance to Clydebank HA especially at a time when there are a number of difficult issues facing housing associations".

Homeless International

During World Habitat Week, in October each year, we ask our staff if they wish to donate an hour of their pay for this campaign.

Many staff contributed and raised £162.85, added together to the match funding from the Management Committee, a grand total of **£325.70 was raised**.

The money helps to support the poorest families in Asia and Africa develop their own solutions to poverty, particularly to housing.

www.homeless-international.org

Success at 5th Radnor Park Clear Out Day

In partnership with **Radnor Park Multis Tenants' and Residents' Association** and **West Dunbartonshire Council**, we held our 5th community clear out in Radnor Park.

On Thursday 24 October, plenty of rubbish and unwanted items were placed in containers provided by West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC). Their Waste Services department reported back that 11.4 tonnes had been collected and sorted and of that, 66% had been recycled!

We were delighted to receive such positive comments from the tenants involved.

Mrs Greer of Leven View said, "I'm over the moon about the help received at the Radnor Park clear out day. Thank you very much. The staff were absolutely brilliant".

With thanks to **WDC Waste Services Section**, our handymen from **ASAP Ltd**, our office staff volunteers, our caretaking team and tenant **Jim Stewart** for their assistance and to tenant **Elma Stewart** for the delicious homebaking which kept us all going!



Tenants use opportunity to clear out



Michael, Sam, Fiona & tenant Jim help out

INFORMATION



COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS JULY-SEPTEMBER 2013

We value complaints and use information from them to help improve our services to you, as can be seen below from the service improvements we have put in place. Thank you to the customers who kindly contacted us when things went right. We are delighted to report a few of these comments below.

The full complaints report for the quarter, our Complaints Procedure and our Making a Complaint leaflet are available on request or from our website. As always, we welcome your comments. No complaints from the quarter were referred to 2nd stage (investigation) or to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

| | 1st Stage Complaints |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Equalities related issues | 2 |
| Other issues | 15 |
| Total number of complaints | 17 |

| | Number | % |
|----------------------------------|--------|------|
| Responded to in full | 17 | 100% |
| Upheld | 10 | 59% |
| Responded within SPSO timescales | 17 | 100% |

| Main Service Improvements | |
|---|--|
| Staff reminded of customer care standards and to pass on messages and return calls timeously and use out of office assistants when staff off sick | |
| New procedure for use of out of office assistant when staff off sick | |
| Contractors reminded of need for good communication with staff | |

| Compliments | |
|---|--|
| I wish to compliment GOC Engineering on doing a first class job in repairing my radiator. | |
| Thank you to office staff & ETI Electricians for the quick service. | |
| The caretaker was friendly, helpful and made the move to our new house a lot easier. | |
| Thank you to the Housing Assistant for her speedy response regarding the bin chutes. | |
| What an amazing job your contractors have done with the social work shower adaptation. | |
| Thanks for the works that were carried out to clear the back and front close door area. It was fantastic. | |

Definitions:

Responded to in full - where we either met the service user's expectations or, where this is not appropriate, provided a full explanation of our position.

Upheld - where we consider the case put to us and decide in favour of the complainant (apology communicated to customer, we accepted failure and then rectified).

Responded within Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) timescales - 1st stage (frontline) within 5 working days and 2nd stage (investigation) within 20 working days.

If you or someone you know would like this newsletter in any other format, please contact us.

COMPETITION TIME!

For your chance to win **2 X Factor Live Tour Tickets** for Friday 28 February at 7.30pm in Glasgow's new SSE Hydro, simply find the answer to the question below in this newsletter, put your details and your answer on the feedback/comment slip (below) and return to the office by **Friday 17 January 2014**.

Question: How much was raised for the Community Pot at the Centre81 Christmas Fayre?

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



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

Feedback/Comment Slip

Please let us know if you have comments or suggestions for future editions of ChitChat or our service in general. We value your views. Radnor Park tenants can place slips in our laundry letterbox.



Name: (Optional)

Address: (Optional)

Email: (Optional)

Would you like a response: Yes No

I have a comment(s) about (please circle):
 Competition Rent Setting Policy Tenants' Handbook
 ChitChat Complaints Other

Comments (please use a separate sheet if necessary):

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HOUSING MANAGEMENT UPDATE

WELFARE REFORM UPDATE: 'BEDROOM TAX'

A number of our tenants affected by the bedroom tax made successful applications for temporary discretionary housing benefit earlier this year. These awards were made for an initial period of between 3 and 6 months (dependant on circumstances). The Council has however confirmed to us that the amount of money available to them to continue these payments is running out.

This means that tenants will be responsible, in most cases, for paying the rent previously covered by the discretionary payment.

We are in the process of contacting those tenants affected as we receive information from the Housing Benefit department. It is imperative that tenants get in touch as failure to address this could result in rent arrears accruing. We will offer all assistance possible, but ultimately the payment of this rent is the responsibility of the tenant.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact your Housing Assistant as a matter of urgency.



Don't forget we have a free, impartial welfare rights service available at our office and at Centre81 - contact us for details.

Did You Know Tenants Can Swap Homes?*

This section highlights two tenancies from our comprehensive mutual exchange list of over 60 properties. If you are interested in the adverts, please contact your Housing Assistant who will provide more details. The full list is available to view at our office reception.

1 bedroom (2 person) second floor flat in Jean Armour Drive with gas central heating. Looking to swap for a 2 bedroom four in a block or house with gas central heating and garden near to shops. Ref B1-16

3 bedroom (6 person) ground floor four in a block in Livingstone Street, Linnvale, with gas central heating, garden and near amenities. Looking to swap for a 3 bedroom house (semi-detached or terraced) in Linnvale. Ref B3-9

HomeSwapper



Although we operate our own mutual exchange register for tenants who reside locally we are also members of HomeSwapper which is an Internet based online exchange service which allows any tenant to look, free of charge, for other tenants to swap with throughout the UK. You can check out their website at www.homeswapper.co.uk.

Please note that you still need to apply to us to approve and facilitate any swap as HomeSwapper does not provide this facility.

Our own mutual exchange list continues to be available to view at our office.

** Please contact your Housing Assistant for information, terms and conditions or download the Mobility & Mutual Exchange Policy from our website. Adverts are based on a description as given by the tenant and not ourselves.*

How we are performing in Housing Management...

April to September 2013

We have achieved all of our agreed targets for all functions for the period but we always try to find ways to continually improve and ensure that the services we offer provide maximum benefit, as well as value for money to our tenants and customers alike.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you'd like to discuss any aspect of our performance or how we set our targets.

| Indicator | Performance at 30 September 2013 | Target to 31 March 2014 | Performance to 31 March 2013 |
|---|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Maximum rent loss on vacant properties | 0.16 % of annual rental income (0.32 % projected for end of financial year) | 0.9 % of annual rental income | 0.39 % of annual rental income |
| Non-technical rent arrears (current tenants as % of the total annual rent receivable) | 0.81 % | 1.1 % | 0.86 % |
| Number of calendar days to let a property | 13.2 calendar days | 15 calendar days | 14.8 calendar days |
| Processing of housing application forms | 6.8 calendar days | 15 calendar days | 7 calendar days |
| Investigating neighbour complaints: | | | |
| Category A (Extreme) | 0 received | 1 working day | 0 received |
| Category B (Serious) | 100 % within timescale (3) | 10 working days | 100 % within timescale (16) |
| Category C (Dispute) | 100 % within timescale (35) | 15 working days | 100 % within timescale (51) |

Have your say!

Rent Setting & Service Charge Policy 2014/2015

As you will know from the review information sent to each of our tenants in early December and from the article in September's ChitChat, we are currently reviewing **our Rent Policy** and this will be presented to our Management Committee in January 2014 for approval. As part of this process we will also decide how much our rent will increase by on 28 March 2014.

Any proposed increase will ensure our management and maintenance costs are met. This means we will only charge tenants the rent that we need to manage and maintain their homes.

We have assessed our likely costs for the next year and based on this we need to apply a rent increase of between **3% & 4%**. This is the minimum increase required to continue to cover our management and maintenance costs.

We are also reviewing our **Service Charge Policy**. Currently our service charge for common grounds maintenance and common electricity is set at £29.04 a year (£2.42 a month). Like our Rent Policy, we will only ever charge the necessary amount to provide these services. We have looked at our projected costs for the next year and we are delighted to be able to keep charges the same for 2014/2015. Some of our tenants also enjoy common area window cleaning, the cost of which will rise from £19.64 a year (£1.64 a month) to £20.42 a year (£1.70 a month).

As always, we are keen to involve tenants in these policy reviews. **If you have views (good or bad) on how we set our rents or service charges or have any ideas that you feel would be useful to this exercise, we urge you to contact us by Friday 17 January and get involved if you have not already done so.** You can use the comment slip and reply paid envelope that was enclosed with your review information in November or call, visit or email us. Your views are important to us.

For example, you may feel that tenants should be charged more rent if they live closer to the shopping centre, transport links or similar or you may feel that your close could benefit from common close or window cleaning or even a service we haven't thought of!

We are reviewing two things at the moment and we welcome your views; the **Rent Setting and Service Charge Policy** and the **Tenants' Handbook....**

Tenants' Handbook Review 2014

The Tenants' Handbook, which we issue to each new tenant, is due for review. As always, we are keen to involve tenants in reviews of documents which affect them.

The sections we have at present are shown below. Do you think we need more than this? Is there any area we have missed? What would you refer to your tenants handbook for? We'd be delighted with any feedback. We are also writing to those on our waiting list who are on our consultation register. Current handbook sections include:

General - about us, data protection, equal opportunities, our staff teams

You and Your Home - moving in, your tenancy, being a good neighbour and anti social behaviour, sub-letting and lodgers, medical adaptations

You and Your Rent - rent setting, service charges and variations, paying your rent, help with paying your rent, problems with paying your rent, free welfare rights service

Looking After Your Home - landlord responsibilities, tenant responsibilities, reporting repairs, emergency repairs, repairs response times, rechargeable repairs, your right to repair, your right to compensation, common parts, cold weather, defects liability, flooring maintenance, alterations and improvements, living in a multi storey property, household contents insurance

Getting Involved - getting involved with us in a way that suits you, your rights to information and consultation

Moving On - applying for a move, ending your tenancy

Complaints - making a complaint to the Association/ Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, making a complaint to the Scottish Housing Regulator, getting help to make your complaint, a quick reference guide to our complaints procedure

If you have views on the handbook we'd be delighted if you could contact us by Friday 17 January. You can use the comment/feedback slip on page 2 or call, visit or email us.

We look forward to hearing from you!

MAINTENANCE UPDATE

How we are performing: our Maintenance service

April to September 2013

We monitor contractor performance to ensure targets are met. Failure to achieve targets can also be due to tenants failing to provide access for repairs.

| Category of repair (target timescales) | No. of repairs | Completed within timescale |
|---|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Date specific (by appointment) | 630 | 99% |
| Emergency (within 4 hours) | 107 | 95% |
| Urgent (3 days) | 482 | 100% |
| Routine (10 days) | 424 | 100% |
| Void works - major (15 days) | 8 | 100% |
| Void works - routine (10 days) | 22 | 100% |
| Void works - rechargeable (10 days) | 99 | 99% |

Bannerman Estate

We will shortly be renewing the electrical distribution boards in the properties at Montrose Street, Cumber Court and Bannerman Place (not nos. 15-27).



Tenants will be contacted to arrange a survey visit early in the New Year.



MULTI STOREY FLATS

Our Maintenance Manager, Alison Macfarlane, attended the Radnor Park Multis Tenants and Residents Association public meeting on 28 October and talked to those present about the major repairs programme for the flats over the next few years.

We now intend to get the views of all the tenants at Radnor Park on their preferences for the order in which these major repairs should be programmed and will shortly be sending out consultation leaflets.

**Think you smell gas? Don't delay.
Call Scottish Gas Networks on
0800 111 999**

Tenant Satisfaction Surveys REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE SERVICE



We are pleased to advise you that we will now be holding a quarterly raffle with a prize of a £50 Asda voucher. The draw for the prize will be held at the end of March, June, September and December.

There are three ways you can be eligible to enter the draw:

- by returning the questionnaire which has been posted to you
- by taking part in a telephone poll when requested by a member of staff
- by replying to an email survey when requested by a member of staff

We really want to hear your views on the service we provide to you so we can make sure you are satisfied or indeed if we have to improve and by taking part in surveys you also have the chance to win a £50 voucher!

CENTRE81 UPDATE



Thanks to the Scottish Government's People and Communities Fund and the many partnerships (see logos above) we regularly run IT, confidence building and keep fit classes. If you would like details for any of them, please call Ali or Jean on 0141 533 7070. Check out what else is happening...

NEWS

CAOS AFTER SCHOOL CLUB
 IN PARTNERSHIP WITH Clydebank & Centre81
 PROUDLY PRESENTS
THE ARTFUL DODGER & MICKSCROOGE
 by Mental Health in Mind
 "CHANGING LIVES THROUGH CREATIVITY"
 £2.50
 £1.50 (CONC)
Friday 20th December
 PERFORMANCES at 3PM (MATINEE), & 6PM (EVENING)
 DOORS OPEN 30 MINS BEFORE PERFORMANCE
 Tickets available from Centre81, 0141 533 7070
 Centre81, 2 - 16 Braes Avenue, Whitecreek, Clydebank, G81 1DN
 www.causingcaos.co.uk /causingcaos @causingcaos
 Charity No. SC038509 Registered in Scotland No. 320835

Christmas Fayre Fun!

On Saturday 30 November we held our second Christmas Fayre at Centre81. Santa Claus paid us a visit and the children were all very excited to see him! There were lots of goodies on sale such as homemade cakes and jams, Indian food, jewellery gifts, ceramics, Christmas cards and decorations and African jewellery. CAOS were face-painting and the girls from Clydebank Housing Association sold hot chocolate, homemade soup and tea, coffee and doughnuts.

Thank you to everyone who helped on the day and to Clydebank East Community Council for their generous donation and to the CAOS Elves for making Santa's Grotto.

We raised funds of £390 for our 'Community Pot', which will help us to provide activities/events for older people and children at Centre81.



INFO

Large hall available for childrens' parties up to age 12

BINGO
 Thursdays 1pm
 £5 - soup, tea, biscuits, 6 games, cash prizes

Slimming Thurs 7.30pm-9.00pm
 Contact Frances on 07455 255462

IT classes with West College Scotland run throughout the week - call for details

Winter in the Garden

- Clear away old crops
- Provide food for the birds
- Protect your garden from frost - put what you can in a greenhouse/polytunnel or cover with bubble wrap
- Provide food for the birds
- Clean old pots and seedtrays
- Prune your shrubs
- Dig over your soil

If you are part of a group or a tenant and would like to arrange a visit/attend a community garden workshop just get in touch with Carolanne at the Centre (details below) or at carolanne@centre81.org.



Check our Facebook page, our website at www.clydebank-ha.org.uk or call Ali or Jean on 0141 533 7070 for up to date programmes/timings or for more details on our great courses.





CALENDAR 2014

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| JUNE | | | | | | |
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| AUGUST | | | | | | |
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| SEPTEMBER | | | | | | |
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| OCTOBER | | | | | | |
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| NOVEMBER | | | | | | |
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| DECEMBER | | | | | | |
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| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

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

The number to telephone City Technical for out of hours gas central heating emergencies, including CHP breakdowns in Radnor Park, is:

0844 579 6493

All other out of hours emergency repairs (fire, flood, break-in), should be reported to our out of hours contractor, West Dunbartonshire Council on:

0800 197 1004

USUAL OPENING HOURS

Monday to Thursday 9.00am to 5.00pm, Friday 9.00am to 4.00pm.
We close every day for lunch between 1.00pm - 2.00pm.

USEFUL NUMBERS

- Strathclyde Police..... 101
- Clydebank Health Centre.....0141 531 6363
- Citizens' Advice Bureau.....0141 435 7590
- Independent Resource Centre..0141 951 4040
- Social Work Out of Hours..... 0800 811505
- West Dun. Council (WDC).....01389 737000
- WDC Trading Standards.....01389 738552
- Gas Emergencies (SGN)..... 0800 111 999
- Scottish Power Emergencies.....0845 2727999
- Scottish Water Emergencies.....0845 6008855

Clydebank Housing Association Ltd, 77-83 Kilbowie Road, Clydebank G81 1BL

Tel **0141 941 1044** info@clydebank-ha.org.uk

twitter: **@clydebankha**

Fax 0141 941 3448 www.clydebank-ha.org.uk

facebook: **search for us**



Public Holiday/Office Closure

Staff Training Closure (am)