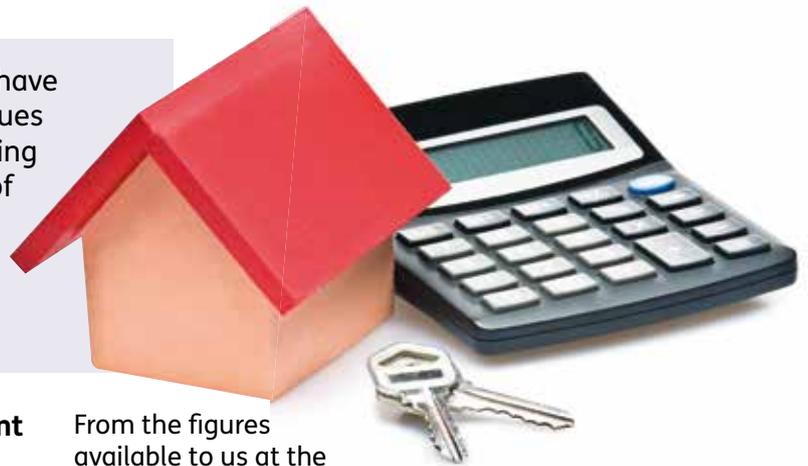




# Rent Consultation

## YOUR CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY ON OUR PROPOSED RENT INCREASE FOR 2016/17

Under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 tenants have the right to be consulted on a range of policy issues that affect them. One of these issues is the setting of your rent. Each year we are required as part of our business planning procedure to look at our rental income and assess what that needs to be for the forthcoming year in order to allow us to carry out all the work we have planned.



### The main factors why we must consider the extent of our rental income

- Our operating costs such as repairs, cyclical maintenance, staff costs and office overheads
- The continuing programme of planned maintenance such as new kitchens and bathrooms
- To allow us to have sufficient reserves to ensure the business is protected against unforeseen risks

As costs keep going up we have to continue to look at our income in order to meet these increases and still be able to provide a good service.

Each year we carry out improvements to a range of flats so if you haven't benefitted personally from a past rent increase you will at some stage in the future.

### How do we calculate the increase?

We look at our budget figures for the coming year and discuss in detail with our Committee about work planned for next year. We consider whether there are likely to be any other significant costs such as renewal of equipment etc and we take into account what the current level of inflation is.

Another significant issue we look at is what other housing associations are proposing to charge for their rents.

From the figures available to us at the end of December from other Glasgow Housing Associations we are confident that for the 6th year in a row we are proposing one of the lowest increases in the city.

The proposed Rent increase for Cathcart & District Housing Association is 1.5% which we are pleased to announce is 1% lower than last year.

To illustrate what this will mean we have provided the comparison table below.

	2015/16	2016/17
Studio flat	£210.63	£213.79
1 bedroom flat	£255.50	£259.33
2 bedroom flat	£314.23	£318.94
3 bedroom flat	£373.96	£379.57

These costs are a guideline some flats will fall into slightly different categories depending if they have dining kitchens parking spaces provided.

## CONSULTATION

We now want to hear your views on this rent increase. If you would like to comment on our proposals please call in to our office or e mail us at [info@cathcartha.co.uk](mailto:info@cathcartha.co.uk) and tell us what you think or contact your housing officer, who will be happy to call out if you wish to discuss this issue and have difficulty in getting to the office or don't have email. We would ask that you provide us with your views prior to 25 January 2016.

## WAYS TO PAY YOUR RENT

We provide a range of options for you to pay your rent:

You can.....

- Pay by Allpay at the post office or Paypoint outlets in local shops
- By standing order
- By direct debit
- By phone to the office using your debit card
- By attending at the office using a debit card
- By Housing Benefit direct

# PAYING YOUR RENT

We are very aware that in times of economic constraints paying your rent can be difficult. The aftermath of Christmas sometimes means that people will have to make difficult choices as bills fall through the door. We would like to remind everyone that your RENT is really the most important payment you make each month. It protects the roof over your head and provides the cornerstone of your family life.

Times are difficult though and if you find you are having to make choices about how to spend your income please make an appointment to see our welfare rights officers or our new Money Advice service which is detailed later in this newsletter. Both services provide specially trained staff to assist in all areas of financial concern from sorting out your housing benefit to avoiding fuel poverty and managing your bills. All appointments are completely confidential and our representatives will carry out house visits if you cannot or prefer not to come to the office.

We will largely be sympathetic to anyone who experiences financial problems and your housing officer

will work with you on a payment plan if you do experience temporary arrears. However if payment plans are not adhered to and contact is not maintained with your housing officer we will pursue outstanding arrears and that can lead ultimately to you losing your home. It is always with regret but we have carried out evictions in recent years due to non payment of rent.

We therefore cannot stress enough the need for early contact if you struggle with your rent.

- The majority of our tenants pay their rent or ensure that housing benefit is in place to do so
- Of those who do experience problems, most seek assistance and with the assistance of the Association manage their account.
- It is only the minority who do not meet their financial problems and unfortunately put their tenancy at risk.

This good out-turn means that we are able to keep our rents low and carry out your improvements. Please don't let yourself become one of the minority!

## GAS SERVICING IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS WELL AS OURS!

As you will be aware each year we are required by law to service your gas installation. This means that our Gas service engineer will call at an appointed time to service your boiler and/ or your gas fire. Our maintenance staff will arrange these visits for you and you as the tenant must provide reasonable access for this Annual Gas Check to be done. We start the process of gaining access approximately two months before the deadline date for the service to be carried out. This means that there is plenty of time to change an appointment if the first one is unsuitable.

Our engineers are very flexible and will accommodate people who are working by calling in the early evening or as a very last resort on a Saturday morning.

Once again there is a very small minority of flats that we have difficulty getting access to and ultimately, as in the case of rent arrears, we will seek a legal right to force entry to carry out this work. If we require to take this course of action the expenses involved will be charged back to the tenant. So please when you receive your letter make access available or contact us for an alternative suitable time.

# The Future of the Victoria Infirmary

A new group, the Victoria Forum, has launched a questionnaire which invites local residents and people who regularly work, study or visit the area to express their views about how the landmark Victoria Infirmary site could be re-developed. You can find it through the following link; [www.newoldvicky.org/survey](http://www.newoldvicky.org/survey) and reply on line. Printed copies are also being produced and will be available shortly from Langside Library where completed questionnaires can also be deposited. More than 500 completed questionnaires have already been returned in the last few days after promotion through social media. News of the sale and developments will be posted on [www.newoldvicky.org](http://www.newoldvicky.org).

The future of the Victoria Infirmary site will be decided during the first half of this year. The 9.5 acre site is up for sale for 'housing and supporting activities'. Savills, the agents for the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS, are promoting the site as capable of accommodating up to 500 residential properties and at present only one building, the listed Administration Block facing Queen's Park, is guaranteed to be preserved for re-use. What happens on this site will affect Queen's Park, Battlefield and the surrounding area including Langside, Govanhill, Shawlands, Mount Florida and Cathcart.

Five local community councils - Langside, Battlefield and Camphill, Mt Florida, Cathcart & District,

Crosshill/Govanhill and Shawlands & Strathbungo - have joined forces, together with other local people and the Cathcart & District Housing Association, to form the Victoria Forum, to press for a full public consultation involving all stakeholders to guide and help shape the future of our place.

Evelyn Silber, chair of Langside CC and of the Forum commented, 'A re-development on this scale will have a widespread and lasting impact on local communities - in how it looks and in the kinds of housing, on local shops and businesses, walking, cycling and traffic circulation, schools and much more. We are acting as neutral advocates for the community. We just want local people to have a chance to be informed, think about and express views on the future of the area before final decisions are made. The vendors and other stakeholders will also be invited to participate in any consultation. The outcome should influence the vendors and potential purchasers as well as affecting the formal planning process. So far NHS Great Glasgow and Clyde have been disinclined to engage more directly in public consultation at this stage but have undertaken to listen to the results of this survey.'

Chris Carus, chair of Mt Florida Community Council, commented, 'a statutory pre-planning application consultation will be too little and too late for a large complex urban site like this. We think NHSGGC



and Glasgow City Council should be working together to consult on a site masterplan. There needs to be a balance between benefit to the public finance and benefit to the local area. But it is impossible to achieve that balance without carefully consulting local people.'

Local councillors Archie Graham, Susan Aitken and Anna Richardson are all supporting the effort to get more strategic consultation on the future of this site. Councillor Anna Richardson commented, 'This is a large site at the heart of the Battlefield and Langside community, and as such I would like to see full consultation with those who live and run businesses in the area. I believe local people have a deep understanding of what their community needs, and listening to their views can only benefit the development process.'

**Contacts:**

**Dr Evelyn Silber 0141 6497441**  
[esilber@pobox.com](mailto:esilber@pobox.com) and

**Chris Carus (Chair, Mt Florida Community Council) 07852 856969**  
[chriscarus@gmail.com](mailto:chriscarus@gmail.com)

## Christmas Competition

We are delighted to announce that Mrs D Wright from Rannoch Street was the winner in our Christmas word search completion winning a £30 voucher for Marks and Spencer.

# RENT AND SERVICE CHARGE QUESTIONNAIRE

We want to hear your views on the rent consultation and proposed rent increase.  
Please take a few minutes to fill in this form

1. **Our historic policy has been to increase rents by RPI+ 1% but this year we have decided to apply an increase based on a starting point of the Consumer Price Index which is lower than RPI. CPI at November was 0.1%. We have set our increase at 1.5%. Do you agree with this? If you disagree, please tell us why?**

Agree  Don't mind/Not sure  Disagree

Comments:

2. **Do you think the rent you pay is good value for money? If you disagree, please tell us why?**

Agree  Don't mind/Not sure  Disagree

Comments:

3. **By increasing the rent the Association can continue to deliver existing services and invest in its stock. Do you think the Association is proposing a fair rent increase? If you disagree, please tell us why?**

Good Idea  Don't mind/Not sure  Disagree

Comments:

4. **Are you happy with the level of consultation and information you get about the annual rent increase? If you disagree, please tell us why?**

Happy  Don't mind/Not sure  Disagree

Comments:

Please use this space for any questions or comments.

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone Number

**How to contact us:** Cathcart & District Housing Association Ltd, 3/5 Rhannan Road, Cathcart, Glasgow G44 3AZ. Tel: 0141 633 2779 or e-mail [info@cathcartha.co.uk](mailto:info@cathcartha.co.uk)

[www.cathcartha.co.uk](http://www.cathcartha.co.uk)

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