

CATHCART STANDARD



CDHA
Cathcart & District Housing Association



The Newsletter of Cathcart & District Housing Association

SUMMER 2014 • ISSUE 17



New homes will be in a class of their own...

The Association are delighted to announce that after lengthy negotiation with Glasgow City Council we now have agreement to transfer the ownership of Holmlea Primary School to Home in Scotland and Cathcart & District Housing Association for conversion in partnership to 30 flats. This will assist in meeting the ever increasing demand for affordable good quality rented accommodation in the area. The project will be undertaken on a partnership basis by Cathcart & District Housing Association and Home In Scotland following our successful joint working at Cathcart Road where we recently built Holmlea Court.

Discussions have begun regarding the proposals and it is hoped that by the end of the year we will be in a position to submit costs to the council for approval for Housing Association Grant funding with an anticipated site start in January-March 2015. The building is B listed and that means that the external appearance and all fenestration

will be kept as is. In addition to providing 30 flats it is hoped that there will be an opportunity to build some new flats for sale in the playground area.

We hope to provide

17 x 1 bedroom flats 2 person

3 x 2 bedroom flats 3 person

10 x 2 bedroom 4 person

1 x 3 bedroom house 5 person

These are early indications and are subject to planning and further successful design restriction.

Upon completion the proposal is that CDHA will own 10 of the flats Home In Scotland will own 20 and the new flats will be sold on the open market.

As the scheme develops we will bring you further updates and when plans are available they will be available in our office.

Management Committee drive

The Management Committee of a Housing Association is the governing body charged with the strategic implementation of the Associations policies, accountability and financial management of the organisation.

To be a member of the Committee you must first be a member of the Association which involves completing the application form on the back page and submitting it with £1 for your life share membership certificate. Once you are a member you are entitled to attend the AGM and vote on any issue requiring to be approved at that meeting. You

will receive AGM papers in August each year and the meeting is held in September.

The role of a committee member is an important one and the **MAIN CRITERIA IS TO HAVE A GENUINE INTEREST IN THE COMMUNITY.** Any new members to the Committee after an AGM are welcomed by the other members and assistance given to ensure that you get the most out of being on the committee.

- The role is varied and interesting and our Director or Chairperson will be very happy to have an

initial discussion with you if you are thinking about it. Call the office and pop in for a chat.

Being a committee member is being an important team member. Decisions are made after full and frank discussion and training is carried out on a team basis. No one is ever "put on the spot" and your commitment to the organisation can be as little as 1 meeting every second month up to a maximum of 1 to 2 meetings every month (one of which will be external if you so choose)

CDHA launches new Handyperson Service

Following the withdrawal of the handyperson service previously offered by Glasgow City Council to all tenants over 65 or disabled persons, CDHA have now set up a similar service.

The service provides practical support for people aged 65 and over and disabled persons who require assistance with manual tasks in their home. The service will be provided by the Associations Estate Assistant team. Our team members are John Kennedy, Fred McBain and Geof Elliot. They will carry id at all times.

There is no requirement for assessment of need by Social Work services and users do not necessarily need to be receiving other home care services.

What assistance is available?

- ✓ Changing fuses, plugs, light bulbs and smoke alarm batteries
- ✓ Hanging curtains and rails
- ✓ Building up of flat pack furniture
- ✓ Changing toilet seats
- ✓ Room re-organisation
- ✓ Clearing out cupboards
- ✓ Plumbing in washing machine (providing connections are already in place)
- ✓ Other similar household tasks



The service is free to all CDHA tenants who are eligible and is available between 9.00am and 4.30 pm Monday to Friday.

You can access the service by contacting our office on 0141 633 2779 or by e mail on info@cathcartha.co.uk. We aim to carry out the service the same day or next working day.

We welcome feedback about the service and our operatives will carry job sheets which should be signed on completion. Please feel free to add comments to this sheet.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of this service please telephone us and we will be happy to help.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey

The results of our latest tenant satisfaction survey carried out at the end of 2013 are shown below. The results are based on the Scottish Housing Regulator indicators contained in the new Housing Charter.

Q1	Taking everything into account how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by Cathcart & District Housing Association ?	% very/fairly 93%
Q2	Prior to becoming a tenant how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the quality of information you received from CDHA	84%
Q12	How convenient do you find CDHA's office opening hours	85%
Q20	Are you aware of your responsibilities to maintain your home	92%
Q30	Thinking about the last time you had repairs carried out, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the repairs and maintenance service provided by CDHA	93%
Q33	Thinking about when you moved into your home (if you moved in the last 12 months) how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the standard of your home	100%
Q40	Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with CDHA's management of the neighbourhood you live in	90%
Q55	Do you believe your rent offers value for money	90%
Q66	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the opportunities given to you to participate in CDHA's decision making process	73%

Analysis of the survey showed most tenants thought CDHA provides an effective and efficient service and that the Association was a good landlord.

The survey looked at a range of services including overall satisfaction with services; rents; service charges; quality of home; neighbourhood; repairs and maintenance and customer care.

The results will be used to identify areas for improvement in services as we are constantly looking at ways to improve our service to you our customers.

Christine Leitch Director of CDHA, said: "I would like to express my thanks to everyone who took part in the survey. The information obtained will be very useful to us in ensuring we are meeting the needs of our tenants. It is reassuring that we have received such a positive response from tenants and you have my commitment that we will act on your feedback and will be looking closely at the survey's findings to see where our service can be improved."

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

We are facing a huge problem with regards the back court cleaning and the use of the bins in the bin stores. These photographs were taken by our Estate Assistants whilst carrying out their duties in sweeping the bin stores in the general area. They are continually reporting that they have to pick up rubbish from the garden areas of the tenements owing to foxes and birds having shredded plastic bags full of household refuse which have been placed in the bin store and not in the bins themselves.

We fully appreciate that since the Council went on to fortnightly bin emptying there is a higher volume of household rubbish. The Council have provided blue bins for recycling purposes in an effort to reduce the amount of rubbish put in the general dustbins. It has been noted however that people put non-recyclable items in the blue bins which means the Council treat them as contaminated and they cannot be lifted along with other recycling rubbish. There have been issues also whereby the Council have not uplifted the blue bins on the days that they are supposed to and we have, when informed, reported this to the Council.

Notwithstanding whether the problem is due to the Council and their timescale for emptying the bins or peoples misuse of the bins there is a problem insofar as the wildlife are creating a mess!

We cannot prevent foxes, magpies and seagulls from existing in the back court areas but we can make it harder for them to cause this kind of mess. We are strongly urging you all never to leave a plastic bag on top of a bin. If the bin at the front of the bin store is

full please use the ones nearer the back of the store. Rubbish must be contained.

Our Estate Assistants are required to clean the close and sweep the bin store after the cleansing have emptied the bins in order to pick up any small items of debris which may have fallen. They are not there to clean up after the wildlife have scattered other peoples rubbish about the garden. Time spent doing that is less time for them to spend on ensuring the closes are clean and tidy. If you do see your rubbish scattered in the back court can you please go and pick it up and make sure it is placed inside a dustbin.

We are currently carrying out a survey to ascertain that there are enough bins in all bin stores for the tenement. The Council can no longer supply bins free of charge to the Housing Association and therefore replacement bins will incur a charge.

We realise that this is not a problem specific to Cathcart there have been documentaries about this issue all around the country. We do believe however that if we work together we can avoid some of these incidences.

Rent Arrears

As a Social Landlord rental income is our main source of revenue and we require to collect the rent so that we can carry out our planned maintenance the day to day maintenance and employ our staff to ensure the associations runs well.

Largely we do this very well and our reports to the Committee and the Regulator bear that out. We are currently performing at 2.7% against a target figure of 3.3% However we still carry arrears that we believe could be reduced.

Our Housing management staff work very hard and anyone who experiences difficulty in paying rent will be able to be referred to our Welfare Rights Officers for assistance in finding out about entitlement to benefits.

It may be that when you moved in to your property there was a few days period before housing benefit kicked in that leaves a shortfall on your account. If this is the case you will have received a letter from your housing officer and this amount should be paid off as quickly as possible to bring your account into line.

Unfortunately some tenants make payment plans that then fail and despite our best efforts to encourage payment of arrears the debt is not cleared. We follow a robust debt management policy (which is available on our website) and as a reminder of what can happen if rent is not paid below are the main steps of the process.

- First letter reminding tenant that rent has been missed/is late
- Second letter/house visit offering payment plan
- Payment Plan is monitored
- If payment plan fails a first warning letter is issued
- If no improvement a second warning letter is issued 1 week later
- If no improvement a third warning letter is issued 1 week later
- Thereafter a Notice of Proceedings for Recovery is served. This means that at any time in the 6 month period after the notice becomes

live the Association can seek repossession of the flat on the grounds of non-payment or persistent late payment of rent. The matter is handed to our solicitor at this stage.

As a housing association we are very reluctant to follow a case through to the final stage but if no dialogue can be established or a tenant repeatedly refuses to accept assistance or meet a payment plan we have no choice and WILL carry out evictions for non-payment of rent.

If you are concerned about your rent account or think you might be carrying an arrear please contact your housing officer.



BOGUS CALLS

We have been made aware recently of another scam which is affecting some people. You may receive a phone call from someone claiming to be from Microsoft or Windows and asking you questions about your home computer.

The main theme seems to be a claim that you require to update your anti-virus and they will ask a series of questions and sometimes ask you to input information into your computer

that they tell you then to read back what it says. Ultimately they will advise that you require to upgrade your anti-virus and they can do a special rate and then they ask for your bank details.

These calls are not from Microsoft or Windows and once bank details are passed over they will try and debit your account for hundreds of pounds..... Be alert!!

CLOSE SECURITY

It has come to our attention that over the last few years the number of attempted break-ins and break-ins in the area increased. We frequently hold meetings with the community police and they advise that this is an ongoing problem in the area.

Please be aware of close security and your own security and follow these few simple steps when you enter or leave your property.

1. Shut and lock your flat door when you leave and
2. Shut and lock the main door on entering/ leaving the close -

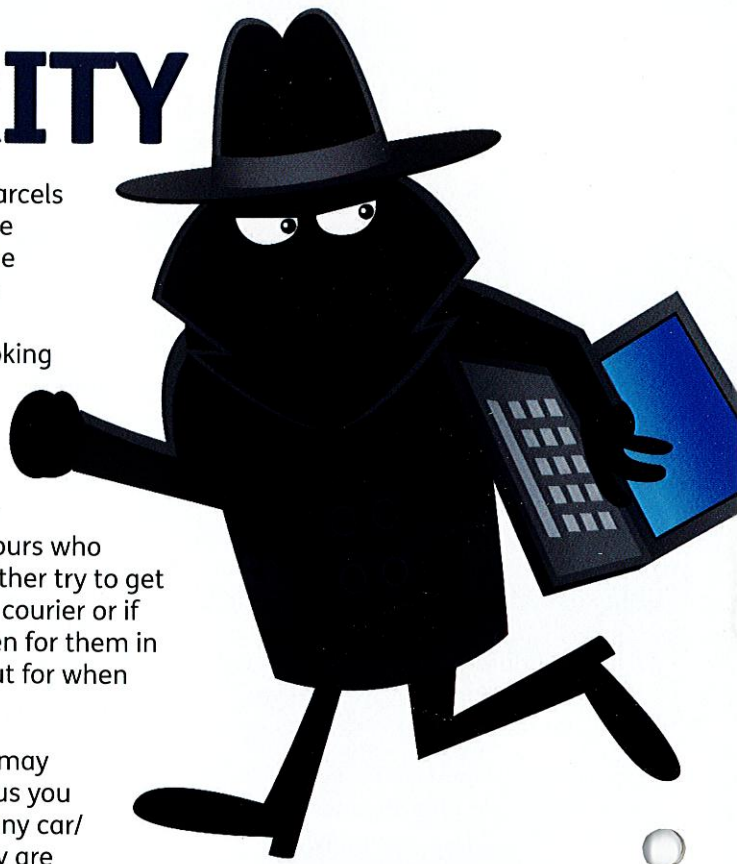
Sounds simple but on many occasions we have found that close doors front and back are left "off the latch" as people nip out for messages, take the dog for a walk or just to empty the bins. This is ample opportunity for someone to enter the close and try different doors.

There are also many parcels and cards delivered due to the increase in online shopping and so many different couriers and delivery companies looking for access into the close - if you do let someone into the close because they have a parcel/ delivery for one of your neighbours who may not be at home either try to get identification from the courier or if that's not possible listen for them in the close and watch out for when they leave.

If you think that there may be something suspicious you should take a note of any car/ van registrations if they are driving or what clothing they are wearing if walking.

If you do see or hear anything or anyone suspicious in or around the close please contact the Police on

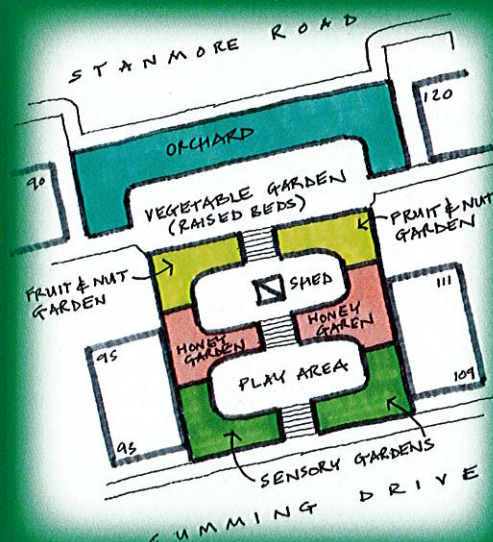
101 and if you have notes on the suspect give this information to the officer you speak to.



Community Garden Project

CDHA have been working with Stanmore Social who is a community minded group taking a keen interest in their Environment. They undertake local projects and aim to make better use of areas that have been neglected. They are currently looking at the area on the plan below and have been talking to a number of funders together with ourselves to get this exciting project underway. You can read more about Stanmore Social on <http://www.stanmoresocial.org/>

They have been successful in being awarded just under £2,500.00 Stalled Spaces funding from Glasgow City Council and we are working with them to try and attract funding through the Cooperative Business Development Fund. Stanmore Social has asked us to pass on the undernoted message about this project. The piece of ground in question is situated



off Cumming Drive and is currently owned partly by Glasgow City Council and partly by CDHA. The area is particularly overgrown with harsh concrete sections. The proposals would soften the area and provide an area for interested volunteers to become involved.

"Phase 1 of the Community Garden Project will commence with a Launch Event on Friday 08 August 2014 @ 4pm on site, to which you and yours are very warmly invited. Please

put the date in your diary and circulate and share this with/to your neighbours and friends. It is partnership project between Stanmore Social, Cathcart and District Housing Association, Urban Roots and Glasgow City Council (Stalled Spaces Scheme and Land and Environmental Services)."

2014 Planned and Cyclical Maintenance

In 2014 as in other years the Association have committed to an in depth planned and cyclical maintenance programme.

81 properties will be included on a kitchen and bathroom replacement programme. The works will involve replacing the existing kitchens and bathrooms and where possible upgrading on the existing. Probably the most noticeable difference is that all of the bathrooms will benefit from an electric over the bath shower.

Tenants will have the chance to pick the colours and style of their new kitchens and bathrooms including wall finishes, floor coverings, kitchen units and tiling.

Those included on the programme will be notified soon, the project is about to go to tender and we hope that the project will commence late summer.

Between July, August and September 13 Closes will benefit from Close painting and window staining. Competitive tenders were sought from Clarkston Décor, J&R Anderson and R Wilson and Son. A detailed analysis was carried out on the tender returns and close meetings were held to put proposals to owners and landlords. The outcome was that all 3 contractors will carry out elements of the project. We had hoped to carry out more painting works however some owners rejected our proposals. As we are bound by the deed of conditions within properties where a majority object the work cannot go ahead.

Many of you will have received letters regarding the 5 year electrical test and inspections. This project has been ongoing



and access has been pretty good, however we would still ask that tenants provide access for this essential work. This project is in its final stages and ensures that our tenanted properties are all up to the latest standards with regards to

electrical safety.

Later in the year the Association will carry out a programme of gas boiler replacements, early indications show that the project will consist of around 20 properties.

General Membership Application Form



Cathcart & District Housing Association

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

I wish to apply for membership of Cathcart & District Housing Association Ltd and enclose £1.00 in respect of one fully paid share in the Association, subject to the Association's Rules.

I understand that my application for membership will be considered by the next meeting of the Management Committee and, should this be approved, I will receive a Membership Certificate thereafter.

I would*/would not* like more information on how to become a Management Committee Member. [*please delete]

I agree that the information provided on this form will be used for the purposes of considering my application, enrolling me as a Member of Cathcart & District Housing Association Limited and entering my details in the Register of Members. The information will be kept and managed within the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Rules of Cathcart & District Housing Association Limited.

**You should return this form, along with payment to:-
The Secretary, Cathcart & District Housing Association
Limited, 3 Rhannan Road, Cathcart Glasgow G44 3AZ**

Signed:

Date:

For office use only:

Date received:

Date ratified:

Reg/Share Cert No:

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

www.cathcartha.co.uk

recycle