



Forgewood  
Housing Co-operative Ltd

# Spring Newsletter

APRIL 2021

## Spring is in the air...

### Congratulation To Our Prize Draw Winners!

All those that took part in the rent consultation process were entered into a prize draw to win Asda Vouchers.

We have two lucky prize draw winners... Tommy Divers and Lesley McMillan. Well done!

All tenants who completed a Covid-19 Service Delivery survey were entered into a prize draw to win an Asda voucher.

We are pleased to announce the winner is Mary Jane McLaughlan...well done!



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# Delivering Our Services To You

**We are working through the Covid-19 restrictions and as the vaccinations are rolled out, we will hopefully get back to some degree of normality. At this time our office and community centres remain closed and our office based staff are still working remotely supporting and assisting our tenants.**

If you have a general enquiry, repair or a complaint you can contact us as usual on **01698 263311** between 9am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday. You can also email on [enquiries@forgewoodcoop.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@forgewoodcoop.org.uk) or visit [www.forgewoodcoop.org.uk](http://www.forgewoodcoop.org.uk).

We will operate in line with Scottish Government Guidance

and review our service delivery in accordance with the easing of Coronavirus restrictions.

Currently we are carrying out essential / emergency repairs only until we receive further guidance when the restrictions ease.

Some non-essential works are still taking place, some examples are safety checks to gas and electricity, fire protection tests and upgrades, outdoor landscaping, close cleaning, void repairs, litter picks, gutter cleaning or any repair deemed to be a matter of safety.

We will update our website [www.forgewoodcoop.org.uk](http://www.forgewoodcoop.org.uk) with any changes to our service delivery.



## Housing Applications & Letting Properties

**The housing staff are responding to any requests for housing applications made and are being processed in the normal manner. Please contact the Co-operative on 01698 263311 should you require an application form for re-housing or housing options advice. All properties which become vacant are being let.**

## Tenant Feedback on Service Delivery during Covid-19

**Many thanks to those tenants who have taken the time to give feedback to the Co-operative on our service delivery during Covid-19.**

We received feedback on how we communicated with tenants and the delivery of essential services during the pandemic and the impact Covid-19 has had on you, your family and how it has affected your personal circumstances.

By sharing your experiences you are helping us to understand the huge effect Covid-19 has

had, and continues to have, on you and your family. We will be using your feedback to continue to improve and enhance our services so they best meet your needs as we make our way through the pandemic.

You can read all of the survey results on our website at <https://forgewoodcoop.org.uk/news/261.service-delivery-during-covid-19-tenants-survey-results/>

### Benefit and Money Advice

**AFTAR SERVICE.....**Please also remember that our Advice For Tenants and Residents (AFTAR) project is still up and running. They can provide support and advice on financial inclusion/ money advice. Please call 01698 263311 to arrange an appointment. These appointments are currently by phone due to the pandemic.



# Rent Consultation 2021-22

Following our tenant consultation and Rent Review Focus Group meeting by zoom in January the Co-operative's Management Committee considered the views of tenants and the running costs contained within the budgets for 2021/22. Having taken all this into account they agreed for rent to be increased by the proposed amount of 1.7% from 1 April 2021.

You will have received a letter confirming

your new rent charge for 2021/22.

A big thank you to everyone who took part in the Rent Consultation Survey and attended the zoom Rent Review Focus Group meeting. Your views are important to us and are taken into consideration when making the final decision.



## Rent Increase from 1 April 2021

### Have you increased your payments to reflect this?

#### Do you claim Universal Credit?

If you are in receipt of Universal Credit you are required to report the change to your housing cost (rent) from 1 April 2021 to Department of Work and Pension (DWP). You can do this via your online Universal Credit account/journal "Update your Housing Costs" and follow the necessary steps on your "to-do" request. Failure to do so will affect the amount of Universal Credit you will receive.

#### Do you pay by standing order?

If you pay by standing order you must contact your bank to increase your payments as this will not be done automatically.

#### Are you having difficulty paying your rent?

If your income has been affected by Covid-19 or for any other reason it is essential that you get in touch with your Housing Officer, Susan Kane as soon as possible to discuss this further.

For information, help and support please contact Susan by email [susan@forgewoodcoop.org.uk](mailto:susan@forgewoodcoop.org.uk) or phone on 077769 90405.

You have a legal and contractual obligation to pay your rent. Please do not put your home at risk by refusing to pay or by failing to engage with us.

## Tenant Hardship Loans

If you're eligible, you could get a Tenant Hardship Loan. The loan can be used to cover up to nine months' rent. This can be made up of:

- rent arrears since 1 January 2020, or
- up to three months of future rent payments, or
- a combination of both - but only up to a maximum of nine months' rent.

The loan is interest free but you must pay the money back. You can pay it back over five years. You won't need to pay anything back in the first six months.

Should you be interested please apply online on the Scottish Government website at <https://tenanthardshiploan.est.org.uk/>

You can also obtain advice and assistance via our AFTAR Service with this loan.



### Important Notice

From 1 July 2021 Allpay's automated phone payment service number will change from 0844 557 8321 to **0330 041 6497.**



# Anti-Social Behaviour

## don't sit back and suffer

**The Co-operative would ask residents to be considerate of each other at this difficult time by thinking about how noise from your home could be causing problems and upset to others. For the same reason, we would urge everyone to be more tolerant and patient with noise and activity that they won't be used to hearing. It has not been an easy year but would ask that you are considerate of your neighbours and respect each other's safety and right to live in a peaceful home.**

Breaches of COVID regulations should be reported directly to Police Scotland on 101 – this is not always a breach of tenancy therefore we cannot take action on each occasion.

However, should you be experiencing any problems of continuous anti-social behaviour we would urge you to contact the Co-operative and your Housing Officer will make every effort to assist you.

All complaints received will be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.

Not reporting anti-social behaviour can make it look like there are no issues.

Where we are able to prove someone has breached their Tenancy Agreement, we will be able to take action to resolve the issues in most cases as long as we have supporting evidence.

**To assist us in investigating, please be sure to:**

- Where possible, discuss the problem with your neighbour first and try and resolve it with them;
- Keep a clear written account of all incidents including dates, times, the names and addresses of any witnesses;
- Phone the Police if the matter is serious and get a Police incident number;

- Provide as much detail as possible in any complaint, of what happened and how it affected you;
- Contact the Police at the time of the anti-social incident and thereafter report to the Co-operative.

**We promise to:**

- Take all complaints seriously;
- Keep you up to date regularly with the progress of your complaint;
- Take appropriate action as quickly as possible in line with our policy;
- Where we cannot resolve the complaint, provide you with appropriate advice and assistance.

**If you have been threatened or feel unsafe in your home please call Police Scotland on 101 or if it's an emergency 999.**

You can also report crime anonymously on **0800 555 111**, or use the anonymous form available on their website <https://crimestoppers-uk.org>



# The common stairway in your close is your only means of escape in the event of a fire



SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE  
Working together for a safer Scotland

**As a landlord we take fire safety very seriously and staff carry out regular inspections of all our closes.**

Within the flats we have noticed there are items left within the common areas which should not be there. These include, but are not limited to, bikes, prams, household items, bags of rubbish etc. These present a health and safety risk as they could affect the safe evacuation from the building.

We have therefore asked residents in these blocks to remove all such items from common areas immediately. We will continue to carry out inspections of these areas and

appreciate the co-operation of all tenants in keeping your blocks safe.

We continue to work closely with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to ensure the safety of all our tenants.

We would remind you that Scottish Fire and Rescue Service offers a free Home Fire Safety visit where they will provide safety advice and guidance on what to do in the event of an emergency.



To book a free home fire safety visit call **0800 0731 999**, or text **'FIRE'** to **80800** or visit information on how to stay safe at **[www.firescotland.gov.uk](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk)**

## Feeding Birds

**We've had an increase in some areas where residents are feeding birds on common paths and roads. Feeding the animals obviously gives the immediate benefit of filling up a hungry tummy, but it may come as a surprise that there are many more disadvantages to giving them a free meal than you may realise.**

Feeding scraps to birds on common paths cannot continue as we have been advised by RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) that this can do more harm than good. It also can have consequences where scraps become trip hazards and the health and safety of others is at risk because of food waste being thrown onto the ground. Please do not throw food waste on the ground, especially areas that are accessed by others. We thank everyone for their co-operation.





# COMMUNITIES TEAM UPDATE

## Christmas during Covid-19

Normally Christmas is a busy time of year and the Community Centre has a real buzz about it with

Christmas parties, the Big Toy Giveaway, Christmas Fairs and visits from Santa being hosted by many organisations and local groups.

This year was little different due to the Covid-19 restrictions. So this year the staff at Forgewood Housing Co-operative did everything they could to make Christmas the best it could be for our local community.

- We hosted Zoom calls from Santa's office at the North Pole, posted out Santa letter kits with everything needed to send a letter to Santa and then organised Santa replies;
- We also applied for Cash for Kids and secured £2,975 which provided for 85 supermarket vouchers amounting to £35.00 per child for families within our community;
- Purchased and made 5 food hampers that were given to lucky households picked at random;
- Posted out activity packs of "positivity" to every household;
- Gave out over 200 selection boxes to children;

Santa chats to kids from his Grotto by Zoom link.



- Thanks to a donation from the Big Toy Giveaway we distributed £250 worth of vouchers to families in our community to buy Christmas presents for their children.

## Forge Ahead AGM



**Well done to Forge Ahead who held their AGM online this year for the first time. Although this AGM was not the way as planned, it was great to see the members who could attend and have a good catch up.**

The group discussed what sort of activities they would like to see going ahead once restrictions are lifted and how the year has been for them during the pandemic.

We are looking forward to when we can meet with the group again in person.

## Things to look forward to

**We can't quite also believe it has been a whole year since the communities team started. It has been a real strange year and although we managed to deliver the meal project and send out packs of "positivity", we have missed seeing you all in person at the Community Centre.**

It has very much been a case of start and stop for us over the last few months which we know would have been

disappointing for you all. We are looking forward and have been planning hard behind the scenes for when we are allowed to have the Community Centre open and running again.

Some of the things to look forward to are digital projects, lunch clubs, fitness classes, a community cinema, new volunteering opportunities, cookery project and hopefully much more (Covid-19

permitted)

We are looking forward to seeing you all again soon.



## Developing Digital

**Over the past year many services and support groups have moved online as result of the Covid-19 restrictions. The community team are working to address digital exclusion across our community.**

We are delighted to have been awarded 70 devices from Connecting Scotland to help people get online,

these devices were distributed in March.

The community team will continue to support digitally excluded people across our community. If you lack the equipment, Wi-Fi, skills or confidence to get online, please contact the community team.



### Community Team Contacts:

For more information please contact the community team:

Richard Bolton  
Community Development Officer  
richard@forgewoodcoop.org.uk  
07495 549 065  
01698 263311

Isla Dundas  
Community Development Assistant  
isla@forgewoodcoop.org.uk  
07733 919 332  
01698 263311



## Billy Muir, Secretary of Forgewood Management Committee

**It was with deep sadness that we learned the death of Billy Muir who passed away on 14 December 2020.**

He served on the Management Committee since 1993 when the Co-operative was set up and was a key member of the Steering Group that helped deliver the Co-operative to the Forgewood area of Motherwell.

Billy will be remembered by everyone connected to the Co-operative and the wider housing community as a dedicated resident who worked tirelessly to make the area a better place for everyone to live. He was passionate about the continuous improvement of the Forgewood area and very seldom missed a Management Committee Meeting.

Alan Thomson, Vice Chair of the Co-operative, said: "Having known Billy for many years as a friend and fellow Committee Member, he was such a dedicated individual and was always doing his best to help make the Co-operative and the wider community continue to grow. He



was very supportive of the fellow members of the Management Committee as well as the staff team at the Co-operative.

Billy was awarded the EVH Long service award for Committee Members in 2019. He was very proud of this achievement. The Management Committee are discussing options on a fitting tribute to Billy at Forgewood Community Centre.

Billy was liked by everyone and our thoughts have been with Agnes for her loss.

## Margaret Halloran (Fraser)

**We were also very sad to hear that Margaret Halloran (Fraser) passed away on Sunday 21 March 2021.**

Margaret came from Forgewood all of her life and will be well remembered as a loving and caring mother, gran and friend of many. Margaret worked a number of years as swing park attendant in Forgewood, a job she loved and gave a lot of time to, which also brought the children of the area together. Even now many people still talk about Margaret and the park behind Fife Drive that she managed.

She also spent time doing voluntary work in the area and was a member of Forgewood Housing Co-op's management committee for a number of years. All staff and committee send their condolences to the family.

Our thoughts are with all of Margaret's family at this sad time.





# LANDSCAPE CONTRACT

**We recognise the landscape contract last year did not go to plan, despite our best efforts. Eventually the contractor complied with the number of cuts that were due to all areas, however it was not always to the standard that we expected for our tenants.**

We aim to make that right this year and are fully committed to ensuring all ground maintenance areas look in good shape throughout 2021.

Idverde will no longer provide the grounds maintenance work. The contractor selected through our tender process is GCF FM Ltd. The team will be in our estates over the next few weeks and grass cutting will take place as well maintenance of shrub, common and

weeded areas. Alex Gemmell (Maintenance Officer) will oversee all maintenance contracts and any issues or complaints about the landscape contract should be directed to the office initially, where Alex will be glad to help.

We hope that all of our tenants and residents will be blooming happy with our landscape programme for the coming year.

**The contractor will not cut any grass where dog foul has been left lying. It is essential that all dog owners clear up any mess to allow the landscapers to attend all areas.**



## Garden Upkeep

**Should you have a private garden area or driveway we would remind you that it is your responsibility to keep this area maintained to a satisfactory standard at all times.**

Regular inspections will be carried out by Co-operative staff to ensure this is done.

## Entries to Garden Competition Summer 2021

**As Spring is in the air we are pleased to announce that our annual Summer Garden Competition will take place again this year.**

We are changing the way in which the competition will be run. You can either enter your own garden into the competition or you can nominate a neighbour. All entries must be submitted to the Co-operative by 30 July 2021.

The competition is open to all tenants and you can enter the garden competition by emailing [enquiries@forgewoodcoop.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@forgewoodcoop.org.uk) providing your name, address and contact number.

No entries will be accepted after the closing date.

In addition to this we will also be carrying out a walk round of all our estates within July to identify any gardens we will enter into the garden competition.

In August we will arrange for all entries to be independently judged. Winners will be notified by the end of August 2021 who will receive a prize.

All winners' photos will be printed in the Autumn edition of our newsletter.....Happy Gardening!

# EU Settlement Scheme

## What is it and who needs to apply?

The UK left the European Union (EU) at the end of January 2020. There was a transition period up to December 2020 and from January 2021, EU citizens will need to apply to remain in the UK - this is called the EU Settlement Scheme.

This means that people from EU countries, the European Economic Area (EEA) or Swiss nationals living and working in the UK will need to apply to the scheme in order to remain in the UK after December 2020.

If an individual has been in the UK for more than five years they will get 'settled' status; if less than five years they will get 'pre-settled' status.

## Why is it important?

It is very important that EU, EEA and Swiss citizens apply before 30 June 2021 as they will need either pre-settled or settled status in order to:

- work in the UK;
- use the NHS;
- enroll in education or continue studying;
- access public funds such as benefits and pensions (if they are eligible for them and depending on status type);
- travel in and out of the UK.

## How can people apply?

You can get more information and apply online at: <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizensfamilies/applying-for-settled-status> There is no charge to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

## Further help

Help is available over the telephone on the Citizen's Advice Bureau's national helpline: 0800 916 9847. Lines are open Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 5.00pm.

Alternatively you can arrange an appointment via our AFTAR Project with Citizens Advice Bureau through the normal arrangements.





# Get ready for spring with our top energy saving tips



Most people who contact Home Energy Scotland, the Scottish Government's free impartial energy saving advice service, are keen to make sure they're not overpaying on their bills. And with longer days and (hopefully) better weather just around the corner, spring is a great time to be looking at ways you could save some pennies. Have a look at our top tips to help you prepare for warmer months ahead and see what you could save over a whole year.

## 1. Reset your thermostats

During the winter, you probably set your temperature at a high level so be sure to reset your thermostats to reflect the warmer weather. Dropping the heat by just 1°C can save you on average £80 per year. And don't forget to reset any thermostat timers – more sunlight means your house will naturally be warmer and lighter, so you'll not need the heating on as much, if at all.

## 2. Get a better energy deal

Did you know that switching energy supplier could save you hundreds each year? According to OFGEM, switching from a Standard Variable Tariff to the market's cheapest tariff could save you around £305. It's easy to switch, and there are a number of energy comparison websites you can use to find the best deal for you, including the Citizen Advice Bureau's Comparison Tool.

## 3. Change the way you pay

Contact your supplier directly to find out if there is a better way for you to pay your bill that might save you money. For example, most suppliers offer a discount for paying your bill by direct debit. You may also get discounts for receiving bills online, as this cuts down on paper and reduces costs for the supplier and is good for the environment.

## 4. Embrace the great outdoors

Take full advantage of the warmer weather by line-drying your clothes instead of using the tumble dryer. This could save on average £35 a year on your electricity bill. Less time spent indoors also means less money spent on your energy bills, so why not head outdoors for a bike ride or take a stroll around the park if you can? Enter our greener travel quiz to win a Garmin Vivoactive 3 GPS Smartwatch. Full details at [www.homeenergyscotland.org/wingreentravel](http://www.homeenergyscotland.org/wingreentravel).

## 5. Switch off

If you're planning any day trips away, remember to switch appliances off at the wall. Turning off appliances rather than leaving them on standby could save you around £30 a year on your bills each year.

**For more energy saving tips and free advice to help you reduce your bills and keep warm at home, contact Home Energy Scotland on freephone 0808 808 2282, visit [homeenergyscotland.org](http://homeenergyscotland.org) or follow 'HomeEnergyScotSC' on Facebook and @HomeEnergyScot on Twitter.**

**HOMEENERGYSCOTLAND.ORG**  
**0808 808 2282**  
**FUNDED BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT**

# Useful Numbers

(Including Emergency Contacts)

- » **Saltire Facilities Management Ltd**  
Emergency Repair Number **0845 606 1555** (all gas central heating faults 24 hours)
- » **Saltire Facilities Management Ltd**  
Servicing Number **01698 743647**
- » **Rodgers and Johnston** (all other out of hour EMERGENCY REPAIRS) **0844 247 2120** (Freephone number **0800 9992520**)
- » **North Lanarkshire Council** (housing benefits and council tax) **01698 403210**
- » **North Line** – North Lanarkshire's **0345 143 0015** contact centre dealing with Bulk uplift, bins, roads and lighting, abandoned vehicles, Dog fouling, dog nuisance, gritting
- » **TRANSCO (National Grid)** (smell of gas) **0800 111 999**
- » **POLICE SCOTLAND 101 (999 EMERGENCY)**
- » **FIRE BRIGADE (999 EMERGENCY)** or text "FIRE" to **80800** from your mobile phone
- » **SCOTTISH WATER 0800 077 8778**
- » **ELECTRICAL DAMAGE** to electrical supply or network equipment Call **105** or your own electrical supplier
- » **CRIMESTOPPERS 0800 555 111**

ALLPAY From 1 July 2021 Allpay's automated phone payment service number will change from **0844 557 8321** to **0330 041 6497**

## Need help with your computer or device?

Call John on 07948 702231  
For any computer or device help and learning,  
CV & Job searching,  
or help with Job centre commitments

Advice For Tenants And Residents



# Estate Walkabouts



All going well with Covid restrictions we are hoping to carry out a social distancing estate management walkabout in the Summer. These walkabouts enable residents to come along and join staff in a walk around our estates.

Any areas of concern can be identified along with ways they could be improved.

If you are interested in attending an estate walkabout please contact your Housing Officer, Susan Kane.

## CONTACT US



**FORGEWOOD HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LTD**

Forgewood Community Centre, 49 Dinmont Crescent,  
Motherwell, ML1 3TT



**01698 263311**



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**www.forgewoodcoop.org.uk**



supporting  
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