

# OVHA

# NEWSLETTER

September 2022

## Community Activities

### **Cosy Corner**

During the months of November & December we will be opening our doors and providing a warm space for anyone who needs it. Hot drinks, Wi-Fi and access to TV and laptops.

The Hub area (within our main office at Cardenden) will be available every Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday between 11am - 4pm



### **Dolly Parton Imagination Library**

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting program that mails free, high-quality books to children from birth to age five, no matter their family's income.

In 2020 Ore Valley Housing became part of the program to help distribute these books for our tenants' children. If you would like your child/children to be included in our mailing list then get in contact with Vicky Murdoch on - 07387 416586 to confirm child/childrens names and date of birth.

## **OVHA Coffee Morning**

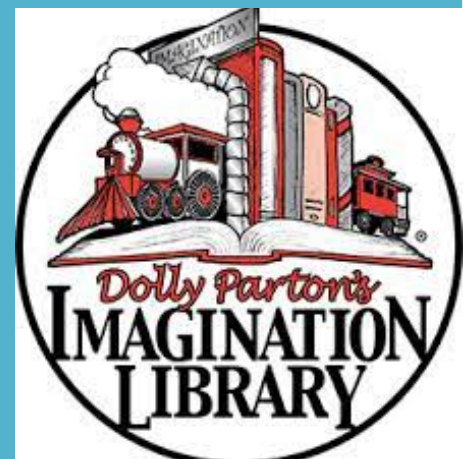
You are invited to our Coffee morning on Wednesday 23rd November 2022 from 10.30am - 12.30pm.

Join us for a catch up over Coffee (& Tea) with Cake at Auchterderran Church Hall. It's been too long since we had the opportunity to meet up and have a blether over cake and some light banter.

What's the catch? Well there is none other than we would like to get to know you all better and listen to your ideas/thoughts on how you see Ore Valley working for the future.

There will be hot & cold drinks, cakes and a free raffle, transport if required and the pleasure of each others company for the morning, we hope to see you there.

Please contact Vicky Murdoch on 07387 416586 before Friday 4th November 2022 to confirm your attendance and advise on dietary requirements and mobility assistance.



# Scottish Social Security

It is an unfortunate truth that the cost of living is rising, these will be challenging times and we need to ensure that everyone has access to the right support, regardless of their need. Social Security Scotland is responsible for managing the benefits devolved to Scotland. So far they are delivering the following 12 benefits:

<p><b>Best Start Grant Pregnancy &amp; Baby Payment</b></p> <p>A one off payment of up to £642.35 from 24 weeks in pregnancy up until a baby turns 6 months for families who get certain benefits</p>	<p><b>Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment</b></p> <p>A one off payment of £267.65 when a child is between two and three years and six months for families who get certain benefits.</p>	<p><b>Best Start Grant School Age Payment</b></p> <p>A one off payment of £267.65 when a child would normally start primary one for families who get certain benefits</p>
<p><b>Best Start Foods</b></p> <p>A prepaid card from pregnancy up to when a child turns three for families on certain benefits to help buy healthy food</p>	<p><b>Carer's Allowance Supplement</b></p> <p>An automatic payment paid twice per year to people who receive Carer's Allowance through the DWP</p>	<p><b>Funeral Support Payment</b></p> <p>Help towards the cost of a funeral for people who receive certain benefits</p>
<p><b>Job Start Payment</b></p> <p>£267.65 for 16 – 24 year olds who have been receiving certain benefits for six months or more to help with the costs of starting a job</p>	<p><b>Young Carer Grant</b></p> <p>An annual payment of more than £326.65 for people aged 16, 17 or 18 who care for someone 16 hours per week or more. The person receiving care must be in receipt of a disability benefit</p>	<p><b>Child Winter Heating Assistance</b></p> <p>A £214.10 payment to help families of a child on the highest rate care component of DLA to heat their home</p>
<p><b>Scottish Child Payment</b></p> <p>£80 every 4 weeks paid to qualifying parents and carers to help towards the cost of looking after each child under 6 years old. Soon it will be rolled out to children under the age of 16</p>	<p><b>Child Disability Payment</b></p> <p>A payment to provide extra money to help with the costs of caring for a child with a disability or health condition. This benefit has replaced Disability Living Allowance for children previously delivered by the DWP</p>	<p><b>Adult Disability Payment</b></p> <p>This is replacing Personal Independence Payments previously delivered by the DWP. It is a payment providing extra money to help people who have a long term illness or disability which impacts their everyday life.</p>

**For more information on any of these benefits please visit**

<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/benefits> or if you would like help to apply for any of these benefits please contact our Tenancy Support and Wellbeing Officer, Danielle on 01592 721917.

Danielle can also complete a benefit check with you to ensure you are receiving the benefits you are entitled to.

# Utility companies - cost of living Increase support

The UK's Energy Price Cap will be increased in October resulting in a substantial increase in utility costs for everyone. The cap was raised by 80% so this will likely result in a similar percentage increase of everyone's bills. An initial package was announced including £400 for each household paid directly into your utility bills. Households most in need will be eligible for further support in addition to the Energy Bill discount including:

- a £650 one-off Cost of Living Payment for around 8 million households on means tested benefits
- a £300 one-off Pensioner Cost of Living Payment for over 8 million pensioner households to be paid alongside the Winter Fuel Payment
- a £150 one-off Disability Cost of Living Payment for around six million people across the UK who receive certain disability benefits
- a £500 million increase and extension of the Household Support Fund available to councils to support vulnerable households with the cost of essentials such as food, utilities and clothing

Whilst a further Government support announcement is expected during the week commencing the 5th of September, most of the UK's utility companies have rolled out their own information and support funds to help.

Support being provided by UK utility suppliers is now available on our website.

The Warm Home Discount was introduced by the government in April 2011 to help eligible customers with their energy bills during the winter. It's there to provide support for those living on low incomes or pensions. If you're eligible you'll get £150 off your bills in winter 2022-23. The money won't be paid to you directly – it'll be added as a credit to your electricity account. This year's scheme has been slightly delayed and is due to open in November. Further information about eligibility and how you can apply will be available on our website and via social media.



You can contact Daneille Porteous on 01592 721 917 if you think you need further support to manage your energy bills over the winter months.



# CCTV and Smart DoorBells

As video surveillance technology becomes more mainstream and affordable, it is now more common to see technologies such as smart doorbells and wireless cameras.

**Although you do not need our permission to install a Smart doorbell the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has stated that *'If you own one, you should respect people's privacy rights and take steps to minimise intrusion to neighbours and passers-by'.***



**Questions that need to be considered by our tenants before installing a home security CCTV system or Smart doorbell include:**

1. Do I really need CCTV or a Smart doorbell? Is there a clear and justifiable reason for capturing footage of neighbouring properties and residents?
2. Are there other things that could be used to protect the property such as better lighting?
3. What is the most privacy-friendly way to set up your CCTV system? What area do I need the camera to capture? Can you position the camera to avoid intruding on neighbouring properties or any shared/public spaces.
4. Has the CCTV you are installing got audio-recording facilities? Audio recording is found to be very intrusive to privacy and so it is advised that you disable any audio recording function your system may have.

**If you have any further questions about installing a home security CCTV system or Smart doorbell, please contact your Housing Officer on 01592 721 917 or email [housing@orevalleyha.org.uk](mailto:housing@orevalleyha.org.uk).**

## Text Messaging

Should you like to receive contact by Text Messaging please let us know by calling our office on 01592 721917 and providing us with your mobile number. If we already have your telephone number, look out for a text message coming your way.







# THISTLE

## INSURANCE SERVICES



We know that having a home contents policy may not be on the top of tenant's minds. With other outgoings such as rent, fuel, groceries and more, household budgets are likely to be under pressure this winter.

But please remember you are responsible for replacing your home contents and belongings in the event of a loss. Contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions and personal belongings. It's a good idea to consider what a home contents insurance policy would cover you for in order to help you make an informed decision on whether you need one.

How much will the insurance cost? The aim of Thistle Home Contents Insurance Scheme is to provide tenants in social housing with an option for home contents insurance. Premiums vary depending upon your sum insured, age and postcode.

Thistle Home Contents Insurance Scheme offers flexible payment methods, which you can pay-as-you-go, meaning there's no long-term commitment.

Premiums can be paid by cash fortnightly or monthly using a swipe card, monthly by direct debit or annually by cheque, credit or debit card (fortnightly and monthly premiums include a transaction charge).

Some of the benefits of the Thistle Home Contents Insurance Scheme

- Covers theft, water damage, fire and many more household risks.
- Covers accidental damage to external glazing
- Covers replacement of locks for outside doors, if keys are lost or stolen.
- Loss or damage to food in a fridge/freezer.
- Tenant's liability - Up to 35% of the contents sum insured for damage to your landlord's fixtures and fittings which you are legally liable for as a tenant.

For further information pick up an information pack from our Cardenden Office or call Thistle Tenant Risks on 0345 450 7286 or visit [www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk](http://www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk) where you can request a call back.

# My Home

My Home launched in August 2019 with initial feedback from tenants being very positive. Have you signed up to My Home yet?

Using your My Home account you can check your rent account, manage payments, report repairs, access tenancy letters, view & update your details, send us feedback and more. The service is available 24/7 allowing for easier access to contact us outside our normal opening hours.

Registration is easy, just visit [www.orevalleyha.org.uk](http://www.orevalleyha.org.uk) and click the 'My Home' button then fill in your details.

You'll then receive a welcome email with a link to confirm your account and set your password. Don't have internet access? Don't let that stop you, why not visit our Cardenden office and use our community computers.

Not sure about the process on how to register? No problem, we can talk you through this, or better still let us do it for you by giving us a call on - 01592 721 917. There's no better time to sign up.

## What do I need to sign up to My Home?

### Your tenant number \*

- Your surname
- Your year of birth
- Your postcode
- Your email address

Register now at [www.orevalleyha.org.uk](http://www.orevalleyha.org.uk)

\*If you don't know your tenant number you can call us on 01592 721 917





# Rent Review Consultation Results

Following our rent review consultation in January 2022 the results were collated and referred to our Board for consideration when the inflation rate was 6.2%.

We asked all our tenants to give their opinion on our proposal to limit the April 2022 rent increase to either:

1. Option 1 4.00% 1.1% lower than CPI for Nov 2021
2. Option 2 4.25% 0.85% lower than CPI for Nov 2021
3. Option 3 4.50% 0.6% lower than CPI for Nov 2021

Tenants were informed that we had calculated that an increase of 4% would allow us to keep our increase as low as possible while still being able to continue with our planned programme of property maintenance and service improvements.

The Association received 19 responses from tenants, equating to 2.7% of the maximum potential response. This compares to a responses rate of 3.8% (26) last year.

The chart on the right shows the breakdown of tenant responses.

With the majority of feedback being in favour of the proposed increase of 4% our recommendation to the Board was to proceed with this increase which was applied to tenants rent on 1st April 2022.

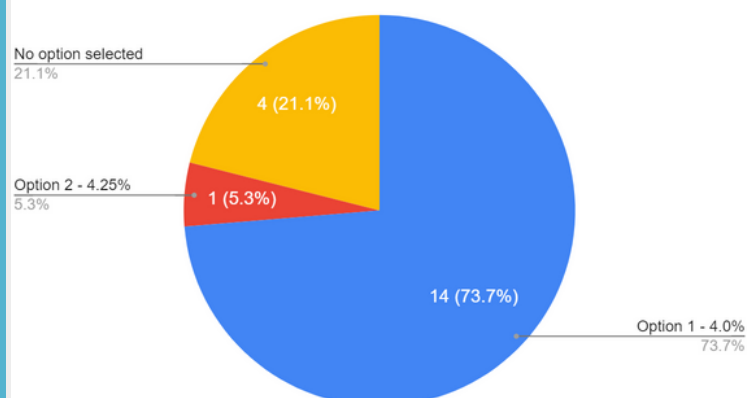
With the reported inflation rate for July 2022 now standing at 10.1% we are continuing to review our costs, but rent affordability continues to be a priority for us and we will continue to do everything we can to ensure that rents remain affordable and represents good value for money for our tenants.

If you have any concerns about the affordability of your rent, or if you are having difficulty in paying your rent, please speak to us as soon as possible. Help and advice is always available and we will make every effort to support you to make sure that you are not falling behind with your rent payments or other household bills.

To discuss your rent you can contact us on 01592 721 917 or email [housing@orevalleyha.org.uk](mailto:housing@orevalleyha.org.uk)



Rent Review Consultation Results 2022/23





# Sustainable transport

OVHA has launched a new electric bike project in May this year in an effort to encourage more sustainable forms of travel. 'Ore Vall-E-Bikes' offer FREE use of electric bikes for anyone aged 18 or older who is interested in using one. Bikes can be borrowed for any duration up to three weeks - ideal for anyone interested in seeing if this increasingly popular form of travel works for them.

To use the bikes, all you need to do is complete a simple registration form. We'll run through all the bike's features with you and explain how it works. All equipment is provided including the bike, helmet, battery charger, reflective vest, lights, padlock etc. - everything you need!

In addition to launching the e-bike project, we hosted a 'Dr. Bike' session at our head office in collaboration with Lang Toun Cycles, who are based in Kirkcaldy. The event was free and offered tenants the chance to find out more about our e-bikes. This also gave them the opportunity to get their own bike checked and receive guidance on care and maintenance.

We would also like to remind our tenants that we also have our electric car club, offering cheap and easy access to rental cars in partnership with Enterprise. To access these services just download the Enterprise app and register:

<https://www.orevalleyha.org.uk/page/ore-valley-ebike-project>

Alongside this we also have fast EV car charging stations at both our offices at Cardenden and the Ore Valley Business Centre. These are subject to availability and you may be charged for their use.





# Repairs and Maintenance

## Contractor issues

In recent weeks we have seen two of our contractors closing down. Braisby Roofing went into liquidation at the end of a difficult and prolonged roofing contract in Bowhill. We are currently seeking prices for the next phase of roofing.

McGill, our gas maintenance contractor, which less than a year earlier had bought over Kingdom Gas, also recently ceased trading at short notice and we very quickly had to put in place interim arrangements with Rogerson Plumbing & Heating Limited to ensure that gas heating systems are serviced and maintained in accordance with legal requirements.

We are in the process of issuing tenders with a view to appointing a new gas maintenance contractor in the coming weeks.

Please note that we have currently paused our gas heating replacement programme whilst we consider options in relation to government carbon reduction targets. We have contacted the tenants whose homes are affected in order to advise but also in the hope that we can obtain tenants' views on heating which can help us develop a satisfactory solution.

## Staff Updates

After nearly six years of service with us our Technical Officer, Alice Quinn left us to take up a new promoted position. Alice left with our best wishes and is doing well in her new job and life in London.

As part of an internal reorganisation we have recruited Cheryl Hall to the post of Technical Coordinator. Cheryl will be primarily involved in the delivery of our planned and cyclical maintenance programmes.



## Planned Maintenance

We are currently planning the following programmes and will be contacting tenants whose homes are included within programmes to ensure that they are kept updated.

Roofing - 17 homes in Cardenden

External Painterwork - 139 homes in Lochgelly and Cardenden

Electrical Testing and follow on work - 74 homes in Cardenden and Kelty

Fencing - 10 homes in Cardenden plus ad-hoc replacements

Window replacement - 30 homes in Cardenden

Kitchen Replacement - 40 homes in Cardenden, Lochore and various



# Staff Update

As part of a wider review our staff team has seen a number of changes since our last newsletter was published in December.

The Housing team now has an additional Housing Officer with **Elaine Ganley** moving into her new role in October 2021. Elaine joined Ore Valley as a Customer Services Advisor in January 2017 and completed the Chartered Institute of Housing, Level 3, Certificate in Housing Practice in June 2021.

Elaine is now the Housing Officer for properties in Bowhill, Dundonald, and Lochore as well as for our new development at Carden Mill Brae in Cardenden. Elaine is also responsible for managing the majority of our stock located in Klinglassie, Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes.

**Ruxandra Cazan** has also joined our organisation as the Enterprise & Sustainability Officer. and will be involved in our commercial and community focused projects

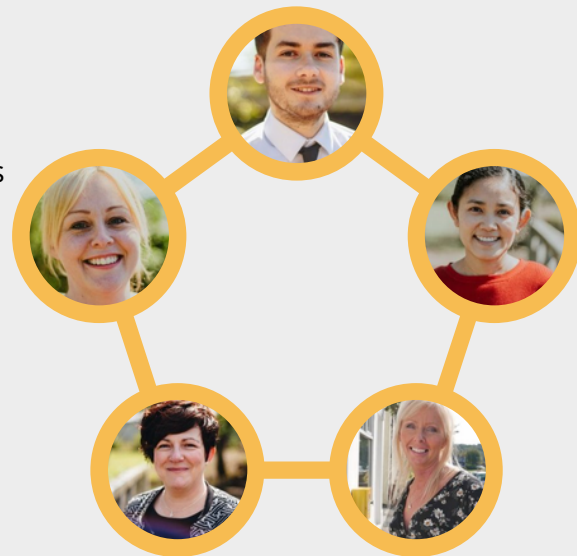


**Ryan Doyle** (Housing Officer) will continue to manage our stock in Lochgelly along with a mix of properties in the Bowhill area and the Whitehall area of Cardenden.

**Kittaya Sung** (Housing Officer), who has just completed a formal qualification to allow us to continue operating as a Registered Letting Agent on behalf of our subsidiary company Ore Valley Enterprises Ltd, is now leading the delivery of our mid market rent services, while continuing to manage a mix of properties in Ballingry and Bowhill, as well as the majority of our homes located in Dunfermline, Rosyth and the West Fife villages.

A further new addition to the Housing team is **Amanda Wilson**. Amanda joined Ore Valley in April 2020 as a Customer Services Advisor and moved into her new role as Housing Services Advisor in November 2021. Amanda has also completed the Chartered Institute of Housing, Certificate in Housing Practice as well as the SQA Professional Qualification in Housing Law Advice that is delivered by Shelter Scotland.

Amanda's principle duties are to provide frontline housing service support for the Housing Officers and will normally be the first point of contact for any tenants who have a housing related enquiry.



The final new addition to our Housing Team is **Vicky Murdoch**. Vicky has performed a number of roles at Ore Valley since her recruitment in 2007 and has a wealth of knowledge and experience in relation to supporting the communities we serve. Vicky started her new role as Tenant and Community Engagement Officer in August 2021 but unfortunately due to a prolonged period of sick leave she has not been able to fully develop her role as she would have wished. However, Vicky is now back and looking forward to the challenge of working with tenants and others to help remove some of the social and economic barriers that many of our tenants face on a daily basis.

As part of her new role, Vicky will also be studying to complete the SQA Level 3 Professional Qualification in Tenant Participation and Community Development delivered by TPAS Scotland.



# Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2022

## What did we do?

**291**

INTERVIEWS

We spoke to 291 **Ore Valley Housing Association** tenants to find out how satisfied they were with the Association and the services they provide. This is done to report back to the Scottish Housing Regulator and allows the Association to improve their services for customers. The arrows below show the change in overall satisfaction compared to the 2019 tenant survey.

## What did you tell us?



**91%** ▲ +3%

satisfied overall with service provided by Ore Valley Housing Association



**99.5%** ◆ ±0%

rated the Association as good at keeping you informed



**100%** ▲ +5%

satisfied with the opportunities to participate



**94%** ▲ +6%

satisfied with repairs and maintenance



**90%** ◆ ±0%

satisfied with the quality of your home



**82%** ▲ +4%

rated rent as good value for money



**96%** ▲ +13%

satisfied with contribution to the management of the neighbourhood

### What do Ore Valley do best?



### What could Ore Valley improve?



Thank you to everyone who took part in the survey. Your views are important to Ore Valley and will help improve the services provided to tenants.



# Tenant Satisfaction Survey

The results from our Tenant Satisfaction Survey (July 2022) have now been published and we are delighted that overall satisfaction with our service has increased when compared to our 2019 tenant survey.

We are now planning to work with Research Resource to commission a 'Getting to Know You' Survey that will give our tenants the opportunity to provide more specific information about their own needs so that we can ensure that our services fully comply with our Equality and Diversity Policy.

This 'Getting to Know You' Survey will also form part of a planned programme of tenant engagement events over the coming months to help maintain or improve our performance in the following key service delivery areas:

1. Information and Communication
2. Customer Care
3. Tenant Participation
4. Repairs and Housing Quality
5. Value for Money
6. Your Neighbourhood

If you would like to join us to discuss any of the above key service areas in more detail, please call Vicky Murdoch on 01592 721917 or email [housing@orevalleyha.org.uk](mailto:housing@orevalleyha.org.uk)

## Ore Valley Online

Facebook /orevalleyha  
Twitter  
@orevalleygroup  
[www.orevalleyha.org.uk](http://www.orevalleyha.org.uk)



## Staffing Changes to our Team

The Corporate Support team has some staffing changes. We said goodbye to Caitlyn McCowan after 3 years working with us. Caitlyn is now working in the NHS and we wish her every success.

Andrea McDonald joined on a temporary basis to cover for Maternity Leave. Andrea has worked in customer service for many years and has been successful in being recruited into the post that was once Caitlyn's.

Amanda Wilson moved over to our Housing Team and Steffy Smith joined us. Steffy has a wealth of experience in the Gas industry and comes with excellent customer service skills.

Our Cleaner, Alan Ross retired after working with us for over 5 years. Alan will be missed but in his place is Lorna Gilmour, who has many years of working in the cleaning industry



**Steffy, Lorna and Andrea**

## Important Contacts

### Fife Council

**Switchboard**- 03451 55 0000  
**Environmental Health** (Rubbish collection, dog fouling etc)- 03451 55 0022  
**Antisocial Behaviour**- 03451 55 0033  
**Fife Council Welfare Fund Team**- 0300 555 0265 or email: [welfare.fund@fife.gov.uk](mailto:welfare.fund@fife.gov.uk)

### Advice and Help

**National Grid**- 0800 111 999  
**Scottish Water** - 08000 778 778  
**NHS 24**- 111  
**Homeless Emergency Number (Free)**- 0800 028 6231  
**Citizens advice & Rights Fife**- 0345 1400 095

## Contact Details

114-116 Station  
Road  
Cardenden, Fife  
KY5 0BW  
Tel: 01592 721 917  
Mon-Fri  
09:00 to 17:00