OREVALLEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2018 ISSUE 71





All of the articles you read in this newsletter can be found online at: www.orevalleyha.org.uk

Latest News

Ore Valley Community Wind Project Wins Major Prize

Ore Valley Housing Association is celebrated success in the Scottish Renewables Green Energy Awards 2018, held on Thursday the 6th of December 2018 at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre.

The awards are the main event of the year for the Scottish renewables industry and showcases the very best in renewables and sustainable energy projects and honours the people, organisations and communities going above and beyond to shape the industry's future.

Ore Valley's Community Wind Turbine project, based south of Cardenden, claimed the Best Community Project Award over some very worthy nominees.

The project is the fulfilment of the Association's ambition to see the local area benefit from a large-scale community renewable project with net profits used to support community projects and the Association's own endeavours in the area.

"We are delighted that this project has been recognised in the Scottish Green Energy Awards. With the project now delivering on its aspirations to derive a financial benefit for the local community, this award is validation of the years of effort and commitment it has taken to reach this stage." - Andrew Saunders, CEO

The turbine produces 1800MW of green electricity annually for export to the grid, the equivalent power for 360 Fife homes and saves 313 tonnes of carbon emissions each year.



CEO, Andrew Saunders with the Award.

If you'd like to apply to the community fund please send your written request to: Ore Valley Housing Association, 114-116 Station Road, Cardenden, Fife, KY5 OBW

Winter Is Coming...

When the weather started turning chilly in November we switched our Tea & Toast Drop-in events to a more seasonal Winter Warmer event.

In this issue of the newsletter we have some helpful advice on how to get ready for Winter (page 10), tips for staying warm in your home (page 11) and information on fighting flu (page 12).

Community Projects

We continue to support many community events and projects such as the weekly Auchterderran Church Drop-in and will continue to be an active part of the community as we move in to 2019. Details of some of the projects we have supported in the past few months can be found on page 14.

Stay Updated

Remember you can stay up to date with all the latest Ore Valley news on our website **www.orevalleyha.org.uk** and social media, so why not like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter?

- f facebook.com/orevalleyha
- <u>witter.com/OreValleyGroup</u>

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Ore Valley Tenants Conference

At last year's conference, we looked at how Ore Valley Housing Association and Ore Valley Tenants could strengthen the communities we work and live in. A number of great ideas were discussed and we are happy to say that many have been implemented.

- Open door approach with the reception at OVHA refurbished
- Rosewell Drive Office opened
- Participation in Scottish Housing Day with an open doors event
- Estate Management Group established
- Weekly Tea & Toast event
- Drama Group established
- Tenancy Support & Welfare Officer
- Key supporters of Auchterderran Church Drop-In

This year's Tenants Conference took place on Saturday the 20th of October at the Bowhill Centre. The conference featured a variety of tenant-focused activities, including a workshop on tenant participation. The workshop gave tenants the opportunity to discuss the actions taken following last year's conference and suggest further ideas for strengthening our communities in the coming years. These suggestions will help us in developing our new Tenant Participation Strategy which will look at how Ore Valley will aim to engage with tenants over the next three years and improve our performance in areas deemed important by our service users.

Also unveiled at this year's conference was the first performance by the Association's Drama Group, made up of tenants and staff, which told the tale of 'Then and Now' illustrating how life used to be for tenants in the early years of the Association and how it is in present day. The group was led by Naomi Breeze who has performed at several association events previously and brought everyone together to deliver a rousing production.

The event was concluded with the customary raffle and buffet lunch.



Ore Valley Drama Group

The Ore Valley Drama Group project aimed to bring together a number of our tenants and staff to design, create, produce and deliver a stage production. The project stemmed from discussions held at our 2017 Tenants Conference and the performance created, titled 'Then and Now' told the tale of how life has changed for local residents since the creation of the Association.

The project was supported by Naomi Breeze who has delivered solo performances at previous OVHA Tenants Conferences. Naomi trained at The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and is a member of British Actors Equity and has professional experience as an actor, performer, drama worker, youth worker, community arts practitioner, fundraiser, development worker, trainer; arts project manager and since 2002 as artistic director of her own business.

The group included 13 tenants and 4 staff, all with varying skill sets and little to no experience of dramatic production and their 17 week journey led up to the 2018 Annual Tenants Conference at the Bowhill Centre where they performed 'Then and Now'. The project helped everyone involved build confidence, self-esteem and new friendships.

The project has helped increase tenant participation, with those who took part in the Drama Group expressing an interest in staying together as a group and working together on projects in the future. They continue to meet informally at local drop-in events and have outlined that they would like Ore Valley's support to produce other creative works. Members of the Drama Group have also gone on to join the Ore Valley Estate Management Group and participated in the Ore Valley Community Growing Project.

It's created an opportunity for me to get together with people I wouldn't otherwise be in contact with. I feel like it's been a chance for me to be heard and to be recognised

It has been so much fun. Full of laughter and I have enjoyed meeting new people, getting out of the house and feeling included. The past few months at drama group has proven to me that anything is possible if you put your mind to it. I have grown in confidence and really feel like I've flourished.



Bowhill Miners Institute

Ore Valley Housing Association recently took steps to acquire the currently derelict Bowhill Miners Institute located on Main Street in Cardenden.

This historic building has been listed as a Grade C property by Historic Scotland since October 1996 and on the national 'Buildings at Risk Register' since 1998. It had been held in private ownership for many years before it went up for sale in August 2018 when Ore Valley was able to acquire it via an auction.

The building played a significant role in the town's history as it was built by the local mining community and was a hub of local activity at its peak. It is also made of Bowhill bricks, fired from the furnaces at the former local collieries, so is very much of local importance.

Whilst plans for the site have yet to be determined, initial investigation works have been undertaken and various options are being developed which the Association will share with the community in the coming months.



New Tenant Portal

In November 2016 we launched our first Tenant Portal which allowed tenants who signed up to view their rent balance, view their repairs and update their contact details. While at the time this was a big step forward for us, there were limitations to the services the portal could provide.

In 2019 we will be launching a new and improved portal, along with a new website, which will provide an integrated new service where users can manage their tenancy directly online, report repairs, and view important dates & documents etc.

As part of the development of this new portal we are planning to create a login for all of our tenants to be sent out when it goes live. For those tenants who have provided an email address this information will be sent by email and for anyone else a letter will be sent with login details as well as a code that needs to be used to verify the user.

Ore Valley's preference is to email login information and we would encourage anyone that would be interested in using the portal to ensure that we have an email address on our systems before the new portal is rolled out. We would also like to invite tenants to test the portal before it is fully made live. If you are interested in taking part in testing please contact us by email at **ovha@orevalleyha.org.uk** or by phone on **01592 721917**.

Features of 'My home' Tenant Portal:

- Update your personal details
- · Pay your rent then see your rent statement updated
- Book your own repairs
- Provide us with feedback on your repair
- · Send us any comments or complaints you may have
- Upload forms/photographs to us
- Secure and confidential data transfer
- Holds important documents eg. tenancy agreement etc.
- Diary of useful dates

Happy To Translate

Ore Valley have recently integrated the 'Happy To Translate' toolbox in to our systems to enable us to better support tenants who speak little or no English.

The toolbox offers a variety of approaches that can help us communicate better including flowcharts, language identification charts, assessment worksheets, graphical 'point to' charts and full translation software.





Ore Valley Community Computers

During the recent refurbishment of Ore Valley's head office in Cardenden, we created a public internet hub with three laptops and a printer that are free for public use during our opening hours of 9am to 5pm. Feel free to drop in and use them if you need to get online, check email, create a c.y. etc.



Housing (Scotland) Act 2014

How will the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 affect me?

The way we manage the allocation of housing, anti-social behaviour and your household rights have changed with the implementation of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

At the end of October all our tenants received a letter explaining the changes to Scottish Secure Tenancy rights made by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. You should keep this letter in a safe place along with your tenancy agreement in case you need to refer to this in future.

From 1 May 2019 all new tenants will sign an updated tenancy agreement which will include all the changes being introduced by the Act.

Current tenants will not need to sign a new Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement (lease).

The changes involved affect your ability to:

- Sublet your tenancy to someone else
- Assign or give your tenancy to someone else
- Request when a **Joint Tenant** can be added to your tenancy
- Leave your home to someone else after you die

Subletting, Assignation and Joint Tenancy

If you want to sublet your tenancy, you need to apply for permission and you need our consent as your landlord.

You must have been the tenant of the house throughout the 12 months immediately before you apply for written permission to sublet your home (previously there was no qualifying period), or:

If you were not the tenant throughout the whole of that period, the house must have been your only or principal home during the 12 months; and the tenant must have told us that you were living there prior to the start of those 12 months.

This change will come into effect on 1 November 2019.

Assignation

If you want to assign or give your tenancy to someone else, you need to apply for permission and you need our consent as your landlord.

The house must have been your only or principal home during the 12 months immediately before you apply for written permission to pass your tenancy to someone else (previously there was no qualifying period); and:

- The person you wish to pass your tenancy to must have lived at the property as their only or principal home from the 12 months before you apply (previously the qualifying period was 6 months); and:
- The 12 month period cannot begin unless we have been told that the person is living in the property as their only or principal home. We must have been told by the tenant, a joint tenant, or the person you now wish to pass the tenancy to. If you have already told us that this person is part of your household you do not need to tell us again.

We can now also refuse permission to assign a tenancy if the assignation would result in your home being under occupied.

These changes will come into effect on 1 November 2019.

Joint Tenancy

If you want to add a joint tenant to your tenancy agreement, this also needs our consent.

The proposed joint tenant must have lived at the property as their only or principal home for the 12 months before you apply for them to become a joint tenant (previously there was no qualifying period); and:

• The 12 month period cannot begin unless we have been told that the person is living in the property as their only or principal home. We must have been told that by the tenant, a joint tenant, or the person you now wish to become a joint tenant. If you have already been told that this person is part of your household you do not need to tell us again.

This change will come into effect from 1st November 2019. Before you can add a new joint tenant to your tenancy agreement, the tenant, the person who is being added as a joint tenant, and any existing joint tenants must apply for permission.

Succession

If you want someone to take over your tenancy after your death the 2014 Act changes some of the rules around succession for certain people. To ensure rights to succession are protected you must tell us when the person you want to take over your tenancy moved in with you.

Unmarried Partner:

The house must have been the unmarried partner's only or principal home for 12 months before they qualify to succeed to the tenancy (previously this was 6 months); and:

The 12 month period cannot begin unless we have been told that the person is living in the property as their only or principal home. We must have been told by the tenant, joint tenant, or the person who wishes to succeed the tenancy.

Family Members:

The house must have been the family member's only or principal home for 12 months before they qualify to succeed to the tenancy (previously there was no qualifying period, the person simply had to be living there at the time of the tenant's death); and:

• The 12 month period cannot begin unless we have been told that the family member is living in the property as their only or principal home. We must have been told by the tenant, joint tenant, or the person who wishes to succeed to the tenancy.

Carers:

The house must have been the carer's only or principal home for 12 months before they qualify to succeed to the tenancy (previously there was no qualifying period, the person simply had to be living there at the time of the tenant's death and have given up a previous home to provide care); and:

 The 12 month period cannot begin unless we have been told that the carer is living in the property as their only or principal home. We must have been told by the tenant, a joint tenant, or the carer who wishes to succeed to the tenancy.

These changes come into effect from 1 November 2019. If we have already been told that an unmarried partner, family member or carer is part of your household you do not need to give us this information again.

In all cases the 12 month qualifying period will only start from the date that you tell us that someone has moved into your home. This means that if someone moves into your home on 1st January 2019 and you do not tell us until 1st April 2019 the 12 month qualifying period will not be met until 1st April 2020.

Telling us about changes to your household

To ensure that your tenancy rights are protected, it is very important that you tell us about any changes in your household.

If you have not already done so, or if you are unsure about whether you have told us about anyone who has moved in your home, let us know now. You can do this by phoning our Housing Team on 01592 721917 or by emailing housing@orevalleyha.org.uk

Get Ready for Winter

Winter is fast approaching (or may even have arrived!) so it's a good time to think about preparing for the worst our weather can throw at you.

The Scottish Government's Ready Scotland website offers lots of advice and ideas to help get you prepared. It can be found online at www.readyscotland.org

There is a lot you can do now to prepare yourself and your family for emergencies and disruptive events. Some straightforward, commonsense actions will ensure you are ready for winter.

Create a household emergency plan to help you and your family stay safe in all kinds of emergencies. This should contain a list of important numbers such as work contact, schools/colleges, doctors, insurance company, gas & electricity supplier.

Packing a small emergency kit and keeping it in a safe place at home will stand you in good stead in a wide range of emergency situations.

Your kit should be kept in a waterproof bag and it should include:

- Your household emergency plan, including emergency contact numbers.
- A battery operated torch and spare batteries (or a wind up torch)
- A battery operated radio and spare batteries (or a wind up radio)
- Mobile phone charger
- Any essential medication, some toiletries and a first aid kit
- Three days supply of bottled water and ready to eat food (that won't go off)
- Copies of important documents like insurance policies and birth certificates, in case you need to locate these quickly or prove your identity
- · Pencil, paper, a penknife and a whistle
- · Spare keys to your home and car
- Spare glasses or contact lenses

Think about what else is important for you and your family to get by during an emergency, e.g. pet supplies, food supplies, formula/baby food.



Think about carrying one or more ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact numbers on your mobile phone or in your wallet or purse. This means that, if they need to, emergency responders like paramedics can contact people who know you and potentially get important medical information as quickly as possible.

Follow Ready Scotland's advice on protecting your home from severe weather and preparing for the loss of utilities.

Wintry weather and extremely cold temperatures mean an increased chance of cases involving carbon monoxide poisoning in the home, particularly when gas boilers and heaters are in frequent use. Further information and advice on how to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, including signs and symptoms to look out for, is available on the NHS Inform website:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/carbon-monoxide-poisoning



9 Tips For Staying Warm In Your Home This Winter

Along with preparing for severe weather with a household emergency plan and emergency kit, it's important to stay warm in your home over winter. We've compiled the list of tips below to help keep your home cosy and keep heating costs under control.



Keep your heating between a comfortable 18° and 21°C, so the heating system runs efficiently. If you are elderly, have health issues or there are young children in the home, the living room temperature should be a bit higher at 23°C.



However tempting it may be, don't turn the thermostat up to 30°C! This will take just as long to heat up your house, but will cost much more to run at a higher temperature. Most people also find that after an hour of this, the house feels uncomfortably hot.



Instead of leaving your heating on all the time, use the timer to ensure that the heating is on when you need it. The thermostat is not an accurate way to control your heating. It may still be running when you don't need it, which will cost you more.



Your heating system needs to be serviced annually and you should make sure your radiators are bled when required. This will ensure that your heating system runs efficiently and helps avoid a breakdown during the cold months. Ore Valley will arrange an annual gas safety check for you.



Protect your home against draughts. Simple and cheap insulation measures such as foam strips can help address problems with heat loss.



Although it is important to not let heat escape, you need to keep your home ventilated even in the winter months. Keep trickle vents open to reduce condensation or you may find black mould patches appearing.



Keep an eye on electricity costs. Little things like switching off lights when you're not in the room and turning off appliances when you're not using them can help to save money on your electricity bill at a time of year when usage levels are already high.



The Warm Home Discount offers extra help for those who need it. The Warm Home Discount is a government scheme that credits £140 to vulnerable customers, often people receiving benefits or on a low income who have health issues or children. To find out if you are eligible, contact your electricity or gas supplier directly. Move fast to avoid missing out as suppliers have limited funding.



Don't forget to top up your prepayment meters regularly, even when you are not using gas or electricity. Try to keep out of emergency credit. Alternatively, speak to your gas/electricity supplier about switching to another payment method, such as direct debit to help you to reduce your bills.

Fighting Flu

Flu (influenza) is a common infectious viral illness spread by coughs & sneezes. It can be very unpleasant, but you'll usually begin to feel better within about a week.

You can catch flu all year round, but it's especially common in winter, which is why it's also known as seasonal flu.

Flu isn't the same as the common cold. Flu is caused by a different group of viruses and the symptoms tend to start more suddenly, be more severe and last longer.

Flu symptoms

Some of the main symptoms of flu include:

- a high temperature (fever) of 38C (100.4F) or above
- tiredness and weakness
- · a headache
- · general aches and pains
- a dry, chesty cough

Cold-like symptoms, such as a blocked or runny nose, sneezing, and a sore throat, can also be caused by flu, but they tend to be less severe than the other symptoms you have.

Flu can make you feel so exhausted and unwell that you have to stay in bed and rest until you feel better.

What to do

If you're otherwise fit and healthy, there's usually no need to see your GP if you have flu-like symptoms.

The best remedy is to rest at home, keep warm and drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration. You can take paracetamol or ibuprofen to lower a high temperature and relieve aches if necessary.

Stay off work or school until you're feeling better. For most people, this will take about a week.

When to see your GP

Consider visiting your GP if:

- you're 65 years of age or over
- you're pregnant
- you have a long-term medical condition: such as diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease or a neurological disease
- · you have a weakened immune system: for example because you're having chemotherapy or have
- · you develop chest pain, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing or start coughing up blood
- · your symptoms are getting worse over time or haven't improved after a week

In these situations, you may need medication to treat or prevent complications of flu. Your GP may recommend an annual flu vaccine or taking antiviral medicine to reduce your symptoms and help you recover more quickly.

For more advice on how to prevent ill-health during the festive season and be health-wise this winter, visit the NHS Inform website - www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/be-health-wise-this-winter

Tenant Repairs Responsibilities

Ore Valley Housing Association are responsible for the repair and maintenance of the structure of the properties we let in order to keep them wind and watertight. We will carry out many repairs, however there are certain repairs that are the tenants' repsonsibility, these include:

- · Replacing bulbs in all rooms with the exception of kitchen strip lights
- Replacing batteries in non-sealed smoke alarms
- Replacing batteries in heating programmers
- Replacing lost keys and lock changes
- · Replacing bulbs in external lights
- Repairs to your own fittings
- Heating and ventilating your property to avoid condensation problems
- · Clearing blocked sinks, basins or toilets where this has been caused by you

If we have to carry out any of these repairs the cost will be recharged to you.

We do understand that some of our tenants may not always be able to carry out some of these repairs, so if you are unsure please contact the office for advice. In some circumstances, for example bulb or battery replacement, we may fit these for you however we would require the bulb or battery to be provided by you.

Kids Light Up Cardenden

We popped along to the Kids Light Up Cardenden Competition event in October and were very impressed by this year's entries.

Congratulations to Ellie Donaldson from St Ninians Primary who won 1st Prize, Abigail Akhtar-Dobson from Cardenden Primary School who won 2nd prize and joint 3rd prize winners Paige Brady from St Ninians and Lexie Hawsford from Denend Primary School.

A special well done to Alexander Brown whose design was chosen for this year's Christmas Lights event poster.

Ellie's winning design now joins all the other Christmas lights brigthening up Cardenden during the festive season.





Strengthening Our Community

In keeping with the 'strengthening our communities' theme of this year's tenants conference, Ore Valley has been actively involved in a number of projects during the past few months...

Challenge Poverty Week

In support of The Poverty Alliance's Challenge Poverty Week, 1st - 7th October, Ore Valley Housing Association distributed 60 feminine hygiene packs throughout Cardenden.

affordability of sanitary and hygiene products continues to be an issue for a lot of women in our community, but is not necessarily one that is spoken about openly. By distributing these packs Ore Valley not only hoped to encourage conversation about this need, but also to alleviate hygiene costs and to remind women that self-care is important for their well-being.

Each pack included a variety of sanitary products, hygiene wipes, a toothbrush, toothpaste and shampoo and were made possible with the support from the local Cardenden Co-op, local Tesco Express, the Cardenden Environment Group and In Kind Direct - an organisation that re-distributes surplus consumer goods to charities of which Ore Valley Housing Association are members.



'Give a kid a coat' Campaign

Ore Valley Housing Association was one of many locations throughout Fife acting as a drop-off

point for Fife Housing Group's 'Give a kid a coat' campaign during September & October.

The campaign was set up to help to keep local children warm this winter by redistributing pre-loved coats and jackets which were donated at the various drop-off points in Fife.

Thanks to the support generosity of the people of Fife, the campaign gathered over 500 coats and jackets which were then available free of charge throughout Fife to those that needed them most.

Child Smile Campaign

In support of the Child Smile campaign and the importance of looking after children's teeth from an early age, Ore Valley distributed 45 Child Smile packs to local nursery children. Each pack contained a colouring sheet, pencils, toys, information and a toothbrush and toothpaste.







Climate Week Scotland

Climate Week Scotland aims to raise awareness of climate change and to celebrate the people taking action on climate change in Scotland.

The Ore Valley Group has been at the forefront in developing community energy projects including the installation of solar panels, the Dundonald wind turbine and most recently the installation of electric vehicle charging points at the Ore Valley Business Centre and Ore Valley Housing Association office in Cardenden along with the addition of two electric fleet vehicles.

To celebrate Climate Week Scotland (1st - 5th October) we posted a daily photo blog showing a typical week in the life of our Renault Zoe electric car.







Winter Warmers

As the weather got colder our weekly Tea & Toast Drop-in events changed to Winter Warmer events offering tenants the chance to warm up with a hot bowl of freshly made soup and have a chat with us.

The 'Winter Warmer' events ran on Thursdays, weekly up until the 13th of December, which was the last event of 2018.

Looking forward to 2019 we are planning to continue hosting our popular drop-ins, so keep an eye on our webiste and social media for upcoming events in the new year.





The Useful Page

FIFE COUNCIL

Switchboard - 03451 55 00 00 Environmental Health - 03451 55 00 22 (rubbish collection, dog fouling etc.) Antisocial Behaviour - 03451 55 00 33 or call the police on 101 Fife Council's Welfare Fund Team - 0300 555 0265 or email: welfare.fund@fife.gov.uk

ADVICE AND HELP

National Grid - 0800 111 999 (if you smell gas)

Scottish Water - 08000 778 778 (if you spot a water leak outside or for any issues with your water supply)

NHS - 111 (for out-of-hours services including mental health services)

Homeless Emergency Number (free) on 0800 028 6231

Samaritans - Call 116 123, email: jo@samaritans.org or visit www.samaritans.org

Breathing Space - 0800 838587 Mental health & wellbeing helpline.

Drinkline Scotland - 0800 7 314 314

Substance Misuse - 0800 587 5879 or www.knowthescore.info

Adult Protection Phone Line - 01383 602200

Silverline (24hr helpline for older people) - 0800 470 80 90

Citizens Advice & Rights Fife - 0345 1400 095 (provides general advice)

Step Change - 0800 138 1111 (debt advice charity providing impartial advice)

Money Advice Scotland - 0141 572 0237

Fife Trading Standards - 01592 583141

Traveline Scotland - 0871 200 2233 or www.travelinescotland.com

ORE VALLEY ONLINE

Facebook <u>/orevalleyha</u>
Twitter <u>@orevalleygroup</u>
<u>www.orevalleyha.org.uk</u>

CONTACT DETAILS

114-116 Station Road Cardenden, Fife KY5 OBW

Tel: 01592 721 917

OFFICE CLOSURES

Over the festive period we will be closed from December 25th through to January 3rd 2019.

If you need to report an emergency repair during this period, phone our office number on 01592 721 917 at any time, day or night, and follow the instructions given

If you would like to see anything included in our newsletters that isn't already you can phone us on 01592 721 917 or email: comms@orevalleyha.org.uk