



Bridgewater Bulletin

The Board and Staff of Bridgewater Housing Association would like to wish all our customers, members, and partners a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



If you have an emergency repair when the office is closed, you should contact one of the emergency phone numbers:

JAMES FREW: 01294 468 113 (For all emergency repairs including Joinery, Plumbing & Electrical)

CITY TECHNICAL: 0333 202 0708 (For all gas heating or hot water repairs.)

If you smell gas or think you may have a gas leak:

- Phone **SGN** immediately on: **0800 111 999**
- Don't smoke
- Don't use naked flames
- Don't turn electric switches on or off

- Open windows and doors to get rid of the gas

If you have a loss of power:

- Phone **Scottish Power** on: **0800 092 9290 or 105**

If you have a loss of water:

- Phone **Scottish Water** on: **0800 0778 778** or by email to: help@scottishwater.co.uk

.Christmas and New Year Holidays
– Our office will close at 12 noon on Tuesday 24th December and will re-open at 9.00am on Monday 6th January 2025.



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Gala Day **Pages 14-15**



Winter Precautions **Pages 22-23**

Don't Let Rent Stress Ruin Your Christmas

We know Christmas is a busy (and expensive) time of year. With all the presents, parties, and festive treats, it's easy to lose track of things. But paying your rent is one thing you really don't want to miss this season.

Why It's so Important

Your rent doesn't just keep a roof over your head (though that's important). It also helps us look after your home, make repairs, and keep services running for you and your neighbours. If rent payments get skipped, it can snowball into a bigger problem. None of us want that stress, especially at this time of year.

Struggling? Let's Talk

If you're finding it hard to keep up with your rent during the festive season, **don't bury your head in the sand**. We're here to help. Get in touch with us, and we'll work together to find a way forward – maybe a payment plan or advice on budgeting.

Tips for Managing Christmas Costs

- **Set a budget:** Stick to what you can afford – Christmas isn't about going broke.
- **Think creative gifts:** Homemade goodies or thoughtful gestures can mean more than pricey presents.
- **Talk to us early:** If you know you might struggle with your rent, reach out ASAP.

Annual Rent and Service Charge Review 2025/26



The Association usually engages with you in early January each year to find out your views about proposed rent and service charge increases for the coming financial year. We have decided to bring the consultation with you forward and to start the process earlier.

We are required to consult with you and you will have received a letter from us at the end November 2024 explaining the two options as to what our proposed increase will be. We will conduct a survey to find out tenants views on our proposal for 2025/26. The survey will be carried out from end November 2024 until 18 December 2024 and we would encourage you to provide your feedback. The outcome will be considered by the Board at the meeting to be held on Wednesday 22 January 2025.

The Board is acutely aware of the hardship that many of our tenants are facing during this cost of living crisis with increased food and energy bills. At the same time the Board must ensure that we generate enough income to run our business and meet all of our financial commitments during the year.

We have been doing our best, seeking funding opportunities and working with others in the community to mitigate some of that hardship. We had lower than inflation rent increase for the past two years with an increase of 5.5% in 2023/24 and 6% for 2024/25. We are currently working out our proposed rent increase for next financial year and all our customers will receive a letter at the end of February 2025 giving at least 28 days notice of the increase.

We have also taken the decision to change the date that we charge rents to the 1st of each month. Rent was previously charged on the 29th of the previous month. All Scottish Secure Tenants should pay a month in advance – on or before the 28th of each month so there will be no change to the amount or the way you pay your rent. Formal notification of this will take place in due course.

Service Charges

A service charge is payable by tenants who receive additional services such as Communal Close Cleaning and Extra Care Housing. Each service charge is reviewed annually to compare the costs incurred against the income from the previous year. Any over or under recovery is built into the following year's assessment. The following year's charge will take account of predicted costs of providing the service during the course of the year, and will contain an amount for anticipated loss of service charge income in the coming year for empty properties.



Housing Services Update

CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN ART AND CRAFT MONTH



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Thanks to the funding from Engage Renfrewshire Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund we are able to continue to offer an exciting programme of **free** activities.



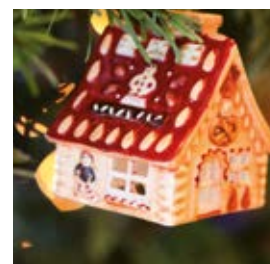
The classes are open to tenants age 60 and over, to register your interest contact our Customer Services Team on **0141 812 2237** or email **admin@bridgewaterha.org.uk**. Also note our Craft Exhibition on 16th December and the 3RD Art Exhibition on the 17th December. Why not join us for tea/ coffee and see the wonderful arts and crafts produced by our talented tenants.

MONDAY 9TH DECEMBER

CRAFT-TASTIC CHRISTMAS CRAFTS

Make a simple tree decoration to adorn your home and a festive light bottle to brighten the winter nights. Plus, refreshments, eats and treats.

Bargarran Community Centre, 1.30pm till 3pm



MONDAY 16TH DECEMBER

CRAFT EXHIBITION & CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Come and see the handy work of our Craft Group and pit your wits in the Christmas quiz. A fun, festive afternoon for all. Plus, refreshments, eats and treats.

Bargarran Community Centre, 1.30pm till 3pm



TUESDAY 17TH DECEMBER

3RD ART EXHIBITION & CHRISTMAS EATS and treats to

make and take. Make some last-minute edible parcels to keep as handy gifts for visitors. Plus, refreshments, eats and treats.

Bargarran Community Centre, 1.30pm till 3.30pm



Meet the Customer Service Team

In the last Edition of the newsletter we explained that the Customer Services Team has been created to ensure tenants and other service users receive a prompt and efficient customer service and that all enquiries to the Association should be directed to the Customer Services Team in the following ways:

- via the phone to **0141 812 2237**,
- by email to **admin@bridgewaterha.org.uk** and
- in person at the office reception.

The CS team members will do their best to assist with your enquiry and make your contact with the Association a positive experience.



Cathy McAnerney
Assistant Housing Officer



Skye Quinn
Customer Services Assistant



Michelle Dunn
Customer Services Assistant



Sam Shiels
Modern Apprentice



Jordyn Macrae
Modern Apprentice

STAFF NEWS

If you've recently called or visited our office, you've likely spoken with Jordyn or Sam, the two newest members of our Bridgewater team. They joined us in August as part of a two-year Modern Apprenticeship program within our Customer Services Team, and we're thrilled to welcome them aboard.

As apprentices, Jordyn and Sam are gaining hands-on experience in customer service, where they handle calls, assist with enquiries, and ensure a welcoming and supportive experience for everyone who contacts us. Beyond their primary roles in customer service, you may also spot them out and about, as they actively learn about the different functions within our Housing Association. This rotation through various departments allows them to build on their existing skills while gaining a well-rounded understanding of how each team contributes to the organisation's overall mission.

We're excited to watch Jordyn and Sam grow through this apprenticeship, and we're confident they will make valuable contributions to our team and our community. Please join us in welcoming them!



Domestic Abuse

In 2021 in order to demonstrate our commitment to supporting victims-survivors of domestic abuse the Association signed up to the Chartered Institute of Housing and Women's Aid Make A Stand Campaign and developed Domestic Abuse policies for tenants and staff. The Association has recommitted to Make a Stand and the pledges below:

- Put in place and embed a policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse. This Policy was developed in September 2021 and was reviewed in September 2024 and is available on our website at www.bridgewaterha.org/uk
- Make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available on your website and in other appropriate places so that they are easily accessible for residents and staff.
- Put in place a HR policy, or amend an existing policy, to support members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.
- Appoint a champion at a senior level in your organisation to own the activity you are doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

We are delighted that our champion for both tenants and staff is Kirsty Sweeney, Housing Support Coordinator. Kirsty brings a wealth of experience having worked for Women's Aid.

At Women's Aid Kirsty was responsible for developing and delivering training in relation to Domestic Abuse for multi-agency groups and delivering sessions within schools to help kids better understand healthy and unhealthy relationships.

**MAKE
A
STAND**

Our homes, our people,
our problem.

We've signed the
Make a Stand pledge to
support people experiencing
domestic abuse, have you?

women's aid
until women & children are safe

#makeastand
cih.org/makeastand



Chartered
Institute of
Housing



Policy

Additionally, Kirsty's role, while based in refuge, involved providing vital follow-on support and person-centered counselling to victim-survivors as they prepared to move into their own tenancies. As a result of this experience, she understands the complex dynamics involved for the victim-survivor while living with Domestic Abuse and in starting afresh.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse and would like to talk to Kirsty please contact her, in strict confidence, on **0141 812 2237**.

By adopting this policy, we aim to:

- Increase awareness and understanding of domestic abuse to help victim-survivors who are tenants/household members
- Encourage the reporting of domestic abuse
- Ensure our tenants who are experiencing domestic abuse feel they can approach the Association in confidence knowing that staff will be equipped to signpost to the appropriate support services.
- Treat all reports of domestic violence seriously and as a matter of high priority
- Empower victim-survivors by providing information on options available to them.

Communal Cleaning Tenders Update



In the last Edition we advised that the communal cleaning contracts were due for retendering. Two tenders were advertised on 19th June 2024 through Public Contracts Scotland for the following services:

- Communal Close Cleaning - this Contract applies to tenement stairs, common close areas, lifts, windows and external common close doors, common close canopies and bin stores & cycle stores within properties belonging to Bridgewater.

Tender submissions were evaluated and the contracts awarded to CAS Contract Cleaning Ltd. A copy of the specification can be found on our website

- Communal Cleaning at the two Extra Care Developments - this Contract applies to the communal areas at Robertson House and Clayson House (entrance foyer, stairs, corridors, sitting room, dining room, toilets, lifts, windows and external common entrance doors).

Tender submissions were evaluated and the contracts awarded to Allander Cleaning Services Ltd

Tenants who receive this service were notified of the appointed contractor, the service specification and new contract started week commencing 30 September 2024. The service standards will be closely monitored by the Association and we will work closely with tenants to ensure service standards are maintained.

Housing Services Update

Sheltered Housing Services Review Update

We reported in the last newsletter that the Board had approved the start of an extensive consultation process with tenants, staff and other stakeholders on the removal of the warden service provided by the Housing Support staff during Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. The proposal is to undertake a 12-month pilot from April 2025 of an independent living model (Amenity Plus), whereby the properties currently categorised as Sheltered Housing would be allocated to applicants age 60 + or younger people with support needs. The tenants will retain the dispersed alarm system and Bield 24 emergency response service.

The review of the service highlighted a declining demand for the service in terms of both new and existing tenants, the high cost of the service and that these changes to the service would benefit our tenants in terms of a service which better reflects their support needs and reduces the cost of the service charges to tenants.



Tenant Consultation

Tenants were provided with a leaflet outlining the costs of the current service, reduced costs of the new service, a description of Amenity Plus, Frequently Asked Questions and a Comments Card.

In September 2024 two consultation meetings were held in the Bargarran Community Centre, Ruth Brogan, Head of Housing Services and Kirsty Sweeney, Housing Support Co-ordinator (HSC) gave a presentation explaining the Amenity Plus service and the reduction in costs to tenants that would be achieved.

To ensure that our tenants and their families or representatives have their voices heard we engaged TPAS Scotland to provide independent advice to tenants, so everyone affected had the opportunity to influence the change process. Eveline Armour from TPAS was in attendance at the meetings to provide independent support and advice to tenants in relation to the proposed changes. The outcome of the tenant consultation was as follows:

29 tenants attended the meetings, and two others dropped in to ask questions and give their opinions.

16 home visits were also carried out for those who requested this.

51% of the sheltered tenants returned their comments card with 75% being in favour of the move to the Amenity Plus model.

TPAS Scotland confirmed they are satisfied that the consultation measures taken are appropriate, robust and represent tenants' views in advance of any decisions and changes being implemented.

Launch of New Tenancy Management Policy



The Association has been reviewing a number of existing policies and putting new policies in place. The Tenancy Management Policy was approved in November 2024.

This policy brings together a number of items that are already covered by the Scottish Secure Tenancy but gives a bit more detail about how the Association's approach to enforcement of the terms of the Tenancy Agreement in relation to the following areas: -

- Abandonment
- Assignment
- Lodgers
- Running a Business from Home
- Sub-Letting
- Succession

These are rights and/or responsibilities that Bridgewater tenants have always had, but it now brings them together in one place.

To accompany the new Policy, updated procedures are being put in place and in some cases new forms and standard letters are being developed.

If you would like any more information on any of the items covered by the Policy, please contact your Housing Officer in the first instance.

The full Policy is available on our website www.bridgewaterha.org.uk and a printed copy can be provided on request. The Policy can also be provided in large print, braille, audio or other non written format and in a variety of languages on request.

Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM took place on 11th September in R34 Restaurant, India of Inchinnan Building, Greenock Road, Inchinnan, Renfrew, PA4 9LH

We would like to thank those Share Members who came along.

The agenda included the following:

- Minute of the previous AGM as held in August 2023
- Receipt of the Chairperson's report on the Association's activities during the year 2023/2024
- Receipt of the Accounts of the Association for the financial year 2023/2024
- Election of the Board
- Appointment of the Auditors for the following year

Board Members considered the Executive Committee for the year 2023/24 and agreed that:

- John Paterson continue in his position as Chair,
- Alastair Morris take the position as Vice Chair and
- Suzanne Austin be appointed as Secretary of the Association.

Other Elected Members of the Board are:

Rab McNally, Ken McIntosh, Ken Caldwell, Jim O'Neil, Gavin Dayer and Liz Bowden.

If you are interested in what the Association does and would like to attend our next AGM, which will take place on 10th September 2025, you can apply for a share membership at the cost of £1, this will entitle you to receive an invitation.

You can contact our office for a Share Application form or download a form from our Website.

New Lunchtime Opening

Until recently the office closed daily at lunch time from 12 noon to 1.00pm, however, in line with our commitment to continuous improvement and enhanced customer service, we are pleased to announce the office will now be open at this time.

Now that our Customer Services Team is in place we are available for you to contact us in person at the office, by email and by phone anytime Monday to Thursday between 9am and 5pm and on Friday between 9am and 4pm.



Annual Assurance Statement

Our 2024 Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) has been submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator and is available from our website for tenants to download. Our voluntary Board receives further reports throughout the year about our compliance with the Regulator's Governance Standards and will report any material change to the Regulator if required.

Social landlords must submit to the Scottish Housing Regulator an Annual Assurance Statement providing assurance that their organisation complies with the relevant requirements of chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework. This includes regulatory requirements that apply to all social landlords and the Standards of Governance and Financial Management that apply to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

The Statement should be made and submitted by the RSL's governing body, or the relevant local authority committee which has been delegated authority to complete the Statement by the local authority.

Visit our website to download Bridgewater HA's Assurance Statement or call the office and we can have a copy sent to you.



Have you a FLAIR for helping your community?

Housing associations in Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire have launched a recruitment drive for people willing to help their communities.

The aim is to recruit individuals to serve on the Boards – sometimes known as Management Committees – of housing associations and ultimately make a difference.

A number of housing associations run what's known as the FLAIR Academy – a FREE training initiative designed to provide all you need to know about what serving with a housing association entails.

The reward is that you are involved in the decision-making process on housing and regenerating communities – all part of the inspiring work housing associations undertake.

FLAIR is made up of the following housing providers: Barrhead HA, Bridgewater HA, Ferguslie Park HA, Linstone HA, Paisley HA and Williamsburgh HA.

FLAIR is particularly keen to recruit people who are under represented in the housing sector. FLAIR positively encourages applications from individuals regardless of sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, age or religion or beliefs.

If you are looking for a way to have a voice in the housing sector this opportunity might be for you.

FLAIR can offer continuing professional development, real life experience for your CV, volunteering with meaning and purpose, networking with professionals and others committed to social impact and ultimately a way of helping improve communities and lives.

Being part of the FLAIR ACADEMY lasts 9 weeks and there are 2 semesters – April to June and Oct to Dec every year. It requires around 6 hours per month. All training materials, resources and reasonable expenses are covered.

Further details are available from FLAIR on **07735 911 831**.

SHR Landlord Report 2023/24

We are also pleased to announce that the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has published its annual Landlord Report for Bridgewater HA; this report



Scottish Housing
Regulator

includes a detailed assessment of Bridgewater Housing Association's performance. Each year the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) publish a range of information to allow tenants, homeless people, other service users, to understand and compare landlords' performance in achieving the Charter outcomes and standards. This helps tenants to hold their landlord to account and service users and other groups to understand the performance of social landlords.

<https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance/landlords/bridgewater-housing-association-ltd/>

If you have any questions or queries about these reports, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Key Highlights:

- **Tenant Satisfaction:** Bridgewater has maintained high levels of tenant satisfaction, with positive feedback on the quality of housing and services provided.
- **Community Engagement:** The Association has continued to foster strong community ties, ensuring that tenant voices are heard, and their needs are met.
- **Improved Performance:** Reduction in rent arrears and efficiencies in re-letting housing has helped the Association reduce costs and post a positive financial report
- The past year has not been without its difficulties. The cost-of-living crisis has placed additional strain on both the Association and its tenants. Additionally, issues related to contractor and material shortages have posed significant challenges. However, Bridgewater's proactive strategies and adaptive measures have enabled us to navigate these obstacles effectively.

For more detailed insights into Bridgewater Housing Association's performance and initiatives, the full 2023/2024 Annual Review is now available on the Association's website. <http://bit.ly/4eGH4zK>

MyBHA

Join the over 1500 tenants and owners who have signed up to MyBHA, making managing your payments, reporting issues and managing your account much easier!

What is MyBHA?

MyBHA is a portal for tenants and owners to manage every aspect of their account. Make payments, report repairs, view correspondences and documents and so much more!

Get started by signing up, and manage your account from the comfort of your home!

Can I manage multiple accounts?

Yes you can! You can set up multiple accounts using the friends and family function. Provide the details including account number and MyBHA can bind these accounts together. If you have trouble doing this, you can always make a request by calling or emailing us for support. We may ask for you to provide details on both accounts to verify it's you.

How do I sign up?

Simply visit mybha.org.uk, then provide the details required. You'll need an email, your date of birth, account number and postcode.

Can I manage someone else's account?

You can do this by using the friends and family function! We may ask you to provide Power of Attorney or permission from the account holder in order to do this.



Bridgewater Hou Holds Successful

We would like to thank everyone who came out to celebrate our recent Gala Day! The event, held on Friday, August 9th, 2024, at our offices at India of Inchinnan, was a great success and was enjoyed by all who attended.

We were delighted to welcome tenants, residents, and members of the community for a fun-filled day of activities for the whole family. There was something for everyone to enjoy, from a petting zoo, football shootout and face painting to a DJ, food stalls, a craft market, a bouncy castle, raffles and giveaways.

We are especially grateful to our sponsors for their generous support in helping to make the Gala Day possible. Their contributions allowed us to offer a wide range of activities and entertainment for our guests.

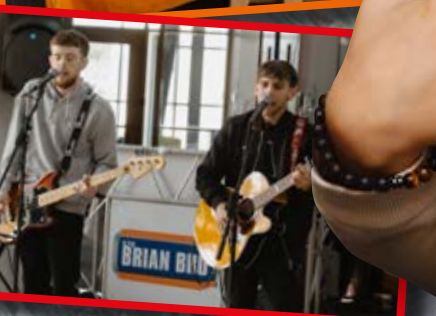
We extend our thanks to the following businesses for their support in making the event a success: Antony Reilly at CGC, Shiels & Kennedy, GAT Plumbing & Heating, Cardwell Garden Centre, Magnus Electrical, Whilands Disabled Access, Enable Property Solutions, Erskine Arts, Id Verde, MCS, BA Property Maintenance, Glen Construction and Brican.

We would also like to thank our staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly to plan and execute the event. Their dedication and hard work ensured that everyone had a great time.

The Gala Day was a wonderful opportunity to connect with our tenants and residents and celebrate our community. We look forward to hosting similar events in the future.



Living Association Gala Day



PERFORMANCE UPDATE Q2 – 30th September 2024

Welcome to our performance update.

We'll be sharing our performance figures in each newsletter, so you can see how things are going at Bridgewater throughout the year. We know openness is important, and your feedback is too! If there's any information, you'd find helpful that we're not currently including, let us know. We may be able to add it to our updates.

Indicator	Target	Performance
Number of members	n/a	34
Average Days taken to close a Stage 1 Complaint	5 days	3.23 days
Average Days taken to close a Stage 2 Complaint	20 days	22.4 days
Average Time taken to answer calls	30 seconds	11 seconds
Customers with a MyBHA Account	826	1526
MyBHA Paper free customers	n/a	201
Average Time to complete non-emergency Repairs	7 days	8 days
Average Time to complete emergency Repairs	3 hours	1.22 hours
Number of households registered for housing	n/a	n/a
Average time taken to relet empty homes	45 days	44.63 days
Rent lost on properties relet as percentage of our rental income	1.25%	0.95%
Total Rent Arrears	n/a	£154,729
Arrears as a percentage of our rental income	4.5%	3.08%

Figures cumulative unless noted.

Become a member



Bridgewater Housing Association members come from all walks of life, including tenants, owners and others who have an interest in housing or improving our local community.

Although Bridgewater's services are delivered by staff and managed by a Voluntary Board, it is ultimately run by our members. Our members are allowed to attend our Annual General Meeting every year where they can hear about the latest business of the Association and meet board members and staff, as well as be entered into annual prize draws. Refreshments are always included, and very popular! Members also have the opportunity to join the Board or Customer Panels to help influence the work and direction of the Association.

Membership will also provide an opportunity for members-only events where members will get the opportunity to meet staff and board members and have a chance to chat about what is important to them.

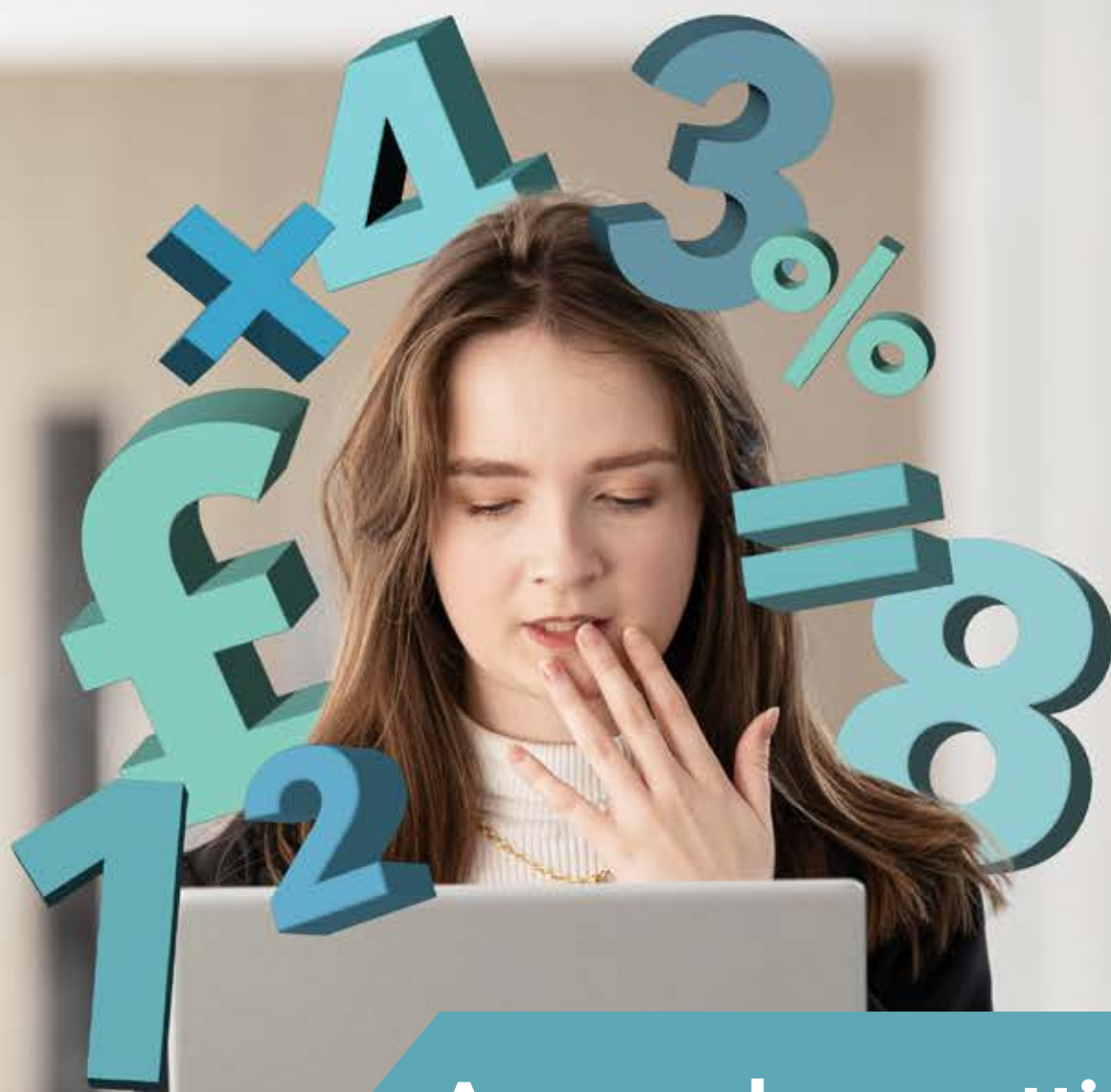
Your lifelong membership is only £1.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Association please contact our office or download the Membership Application Form from our website.

Your membership application will be considered by the Board at their next Board meeting. If your application is approved by the Board you will immediately become a member and your name and address will appear in the Register of Members. You will be issued with a certificate for one share of the Association.

Who can become a member of the Association?

Tenants of the Association or partners or adult children (18 or over) of tenants who reside with them, owner occupiers, and the partners or adult children (18 or over) of such owner occupiers residing with them, or general individuals can become members of the Association.



Are numbers getting in your way?

From getting ahead at work, to paying the bills, cooking, or helping the kids with maths homework – numbers pop up everywhere.

Find free numeracy support and courses near you.
Call **0808 171 3030** or go to **multiply123.co.uk**

MULTIPLY



Funded by
UK Government



GLASGOW
CITY REGION

Care & Repair Launches New Website to Enhance Services in Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire, and Renfrewshire



Care & Repair, an essential service operated by Bridgewater Housing Association, has launched a new website to better support residents across Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire, and Renfrewshire. This updated digital platform is designed to provide a more accessible and user-friendly experience, allowing clients to easily learn about and access the valuable services Care & Repair offers to older adults and people with disabilities.

New Website Features

The launch of Care & Repair's new website marks an important step in modernising the way we engage with the public. The new platform offers several features aimed at improving user experience, such as:

- **Easy Navigation:** The site's simple layout allows users to quickly find the services they need.
- **Online Forms:** Residents can now submit repair or adaptation requests directly online, making the process more convenient and streamlined.
- **Service Information:** Clear descriptions of all available services, eligibility criteria, and how to apply are presented in an easy-to-understand format.
- **Contact Options:** Multiple ways to get in touch with the Care & Repair team, including an inquiry form, email, and phone contact details.

This digital revamp reflects our commitment to staying up-to-date with technological advancements, ensuring we can better serve the needs of the local community.

The new website is designed with accessibility in mind, recognising that many of the people Care & Repair serves may not be highly familiar with technology. By making the site as intuitive and straightforward as possible, we hope to remove barriers and make it easier for clients, their families, or carers to find the information they need quickly.

As the demand for at-home support services continues to grow in the regions Care & Repair serves, the new website will help streamline the process of reaching more people in need. Bridgewater remains dedicated to providing excellent, personalised services to ensure that individuals can stay in the homes they love, safely and independently, for as long as possible.

By investing in our online presence, Care & Repair is ensuring that we remain a crucial resource for Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire, and Renfrewshire residents, while also preparing for the future needs of an aging population.

For more information or to explore the services provided, visit the new Care & Repair website today at carerepairrenfrewshire.org.uk.

Care & Repair Update



About Us

If you are a tenant or home owner aged 60+, or with a disability, Care & Repair can offer you assistance with small repairs/handyman jobs. There are no labour costs associated with the service, you would just be required to purchase any materials required to carry out the works.

Our service is funded to carry out small repairs that take no longer than 2 hours to complete. Please note we do not operate as an emergency service and we operate a booking system which can sometimes be booked a few weeks in advance.



JOINERY



ELECTRICAL



PLUMBING



SAFETY & SECURITY



Call us for more info  **0141 812 4111**

Barholm Playpark Renovation Update

We are pleased to announce that Cardwell Nurseries has completed the major renovation works at Barholm Playpark, with the project successfully finalised in October 2024. The renovation included significant improvements to the park layout, the addition of new bins, upgraded safety surfaces around equipment, and extra seating to enhance the park's usability for residents.

As part of their commitment to providing community benefits, JS Harvie also gave all the play equipment a fresh coat of paint, ensuring it looks as vibrant as the newly improved park.

While the renovation works are now complete, the park will remain closed until **spring 2025** to allow the newly seeded grass to establish and ensure the park is ready for long-term use without risk of damage.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we prepare Barholm Playpark for a safe and enjoyable reopening. Updates will continue to be shared on our website and social media channels. Alternatively, feel free to contact our office for the latest information.

Bridgewater Housing Association remains dedicated to providing quality amenities for the community and ensuring Barholm Playpark can be enjoyed for years to come.



Property Services and Factoring Update

Winter Precautions



Cold weather affects all of us, including our relatives, friends and neighbours, and particularly older and vulnerable people in our community.

Try to keep your home reasonably warm day and night. Wearing several layers of thin clothing made with wool, cotton, or fleecy synthetic materials is better than wearing one thick layer of clothes.

Let us know if you think your heating is not warming up your house enough or if you're feeling any cold draughts. It's better to sort these things out now rather than when it gets really cold. Someone in our Property Services Team will be happy to assist you.

Looking after your home

Burst and frozen pipes can be avoided if some essential precautions are taken. Help to protect your home and your belongings with these simple steps.

If You Are Going on Holiday

If you're planning to go away for more than a day or two, turn off the stop valve and drain off both hot and cold-water systems. Contact our Property Services Team at the office if you are unsure of where this is or what to do. If you leave the house empty for a period, to go on holiday for example, it is a good idea to leave the keys with a relative or neighbour and to inform the Police. You should also tell your Housing Officer at the office when you will be away.

If you live in a block of flats, check with your neighbours before turning off the water in case it affects the water supply to the block.

Heating the Roof Space

In the event of very low temperatures, it is a good idea to open the hatch to the roof space, (if you have one). Although this will add slightly to your heating bill it will give additional protection to your water tank and pipes in the roof space.

Before Your House Freezes Up

1. Find out where your stop valve is located. This is the stop cock fitted to the pipe that brings water into your home. It's often located under the kitchen sink, but not always.
2. If you have any pipework that you feel should be insulated, let the Association's Property Services Team know and we will check this for you.
3. If you have an external tap, turn off the water supply to it (it should be fitted with its own stop cock) and open the tap so that any water can drain away.

Property Services and Factoring Update

If You Get A Burst Pipe

1. Turn off the water at the stop valve
2. Switch off the electricity at the mains
3. Switch off any water heaters
4. Switch off central heating systems
5. Open all taps to sinks and bath to let the water drain away
6. If possible, collect water in the bath for flushing the toilet and for washing
7. Call our office during working hours on **0141 812 2237** or the emergency call out number from when the office is closed are available via our website.
8. Warn neighbours who might be affected by leaks.



If You Get Frozen Up

1. Turn off the water at the stop valve
2. Open all taps to sinks and bath
3. If possible, collect water in the bath for flushing the toilet and for washing
4. Raise the temperature in the house gradually using your central heating system



Central Heating

It is a good idea to leave your heating system on, even when you are out or away on holiday. Leave the boiler on at a very low setting, and turn the radiator valves to the 'frost' setting. Again, if you are unsure about this contact our Technical Department.

Are You Insured?

The next fire, flood or accident could happen to you. Have you insured your furniture and household contents? Check with your own insurer that you are covered for this type of eventuality. Tenants with no household insurance could be facing real financial disaster so please make sure that you have adequate insurance.



Remember

Whether you are in the house or away in holiday, you are responsible for it and may have to pay for damage done by frost if it could have been avoided.



Property Services and Factoring Update

Update on Changes to Factored Invoices: Moving to Real-Time Billing

In June 2024, we wrote to all factored owners outlining planned improvements to the factoring service, including changes to the billing periods for invoices. We are pleased to update you on the progress made and confirm that common charges invoices will be issued as scheduled during the week commencing 2nd December.

For **house owners**, the December invoice will cover charges for the extended period from 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2024. This will be the final time invoices are issued during the festive period. Starting in June 2025, invoices for house owners will transition to an **annual billing cycle issued each June**.

For **flat owners**, invoices issued during the week commencing 2nd December will include common block repairs and charges for the period from 1st October 2023 to 30th September 2024. Flat owners will continue to **receive invoices every six months, issued in June and December**.

We are confident these changes, alongside our broader investment in improving the factoring service, will enhance transparency and efficiency. Your feedback and suggestions are always welcome as we continue to refine and improve the service for our factored owners.

If you would like a copy of our June 2024 correspondence, which details these changes in full, please contact our office, and we will be happy to assist.

Thank you for your continued support as we implement these improvements.

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS UPDATE

We are delighted to share that Bridgewater Housing Association has received £28,990 in grant funding from the Scottish Government to support our 2024/25 aids and adaptations programme. Whilst we received the funding later in the year than expected, this funding will allow us to carry out essential adaptations in our tenants' homes, helping them to continue living independently and safely within their properties.

However, as our aids and adaptations programme is grant-funded, and we are allocated a limited amount each year, we are currently operating with an approximate one-year waiting list from the time of referral.

In addition, we recently reviewed and updated our **Aids and Adaptations Policy**, which was approved for publication in November 2024. This updated policy is now available on our website. If you would like to view the policy but don't have internet access, please contact our Customer Services team to request a written copy to be sent to you.

If you believe you may require an adaptation in your home, please contact **Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership** directly. You can visit their website at renfrewshire.hsc.scot or call **0141 487 2888** to arrange an occupational therapist assessment.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to deliver these vital services to our tenants.

Struggling to pay Fuel Bills?

We are here to help!

Housing Association Charitable (HACT) Fuel Support Funding

The Association is able to help our tenants with the cost of living crisis by providing fuel vouchers thanks to the Housing Association Charitable Trust (HACT).

The funding will enable us to provide **£49 fuel vouchers** to tenants in fuel debt or fuel poverty. Vouchers are redeemable via PayPoint only.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with your Housing Officer or our **Customer Services Team on 0141 812 2237**

to check if you are eligible. Please note this is only available to **Non British Gas customers** with a prepayment meter.

This funding may end in December or whenever funding runs out so please get in touch straight away if you think you may be eligible.



YOUNG CARER GRANT

The Young Carer Grant is a payment of £383.75 from Social Security Scotland. It is paid once a year to carers aged 16 to 18 who do at least 16 hours of caring a week on average. To claim the Young Carer Grant, you must meet all of the following criteria:

- You are aged 16 to 18 years and living in Scotland.
- You are caring for someone getting certain disability benefits.
- You are providing care for at least 16 hours a week on average.
- You are not receiving the Carer's Allowance.
- You can be at school, in further education like in college, in work or unemployed.

Scan the QR code below to find out more at the Citizen's Advice Scotland website



HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES HELP THE PLANET



At the end of 2023 we introduced the Lintel Trust pilot project with the aim of helping to contribute to meeting Scotland's environmental target of zero waste and encourage our communities to save money by upcycling and reusing more.....

As part of the pilot the project will receive up to three complimentary workshops delivered during 2025 by Rags to Riches, an award-winning social enterprise based in Glasgow.



Volunteers Needed!!

We are looking for 8 volunteers who would be willing to attend sewing classes which would be held in Bargarran Community Centre over 3 consecutive weeks in 2025. Rags to Riches will provide the sewing machines and material.

Rags to Riches specialise in providing skills, tools for the job, materials, and expertise in upcycling. They have a team of volunteers' keen to encourage skills sharing and ways for communities to celebrate their creations. Some communities might choose to hold a swap shop or a fashion show of creations – it is entirely led by our community/ groups.

Benefits to people taking part:

- Learn new skills
- take part in a social activity
- make a difference
- create something new from something old
- make new friends
- find new interests
- raise some money for the community
- take part in decision making



Textile Recycling

Textiles are the UK's fastest growing household waste stream. By reusing and recycling textiles we can reduce the amount we send to landfill and give unwanted items a new lease of life. Taking part in sustainable initiatives can help reduce our organisation's carbon footprint whilst supporting local community projects through raising funds.



Did you know:

- Textiles and shoes account for more than 12% of all waste in landfill sites?
- In a single year, the amount of clothes thrown away in the UK could fill Wembley Stadium to the brim?
- Nearly 1 million tonnes of recyclable textiles are put into landfills every year.
- If everyone in the UK bought just one reclaimed woollen jumper each year, we would save roughly 400 million gallons of water.



Lintel Trust have partnered with Clyde Recycling for this initiative. Clyde Recycling have over 30 years of industry leading experience in the recycling and distribution of donated clothes and work with some of the UK's leading charities. For every tonne of textiles, Clyde Recycling will donate £200 to Lintel Trust. Clyde Recycling will provide a recycling bank which will be located within the local community. After some delay, look out for the Lintel Trust recycling clothes bank which will be located in the car park at Mains Drive shops.

Donated clothing is taken to Clyde Recycling's modern sorting facility where it is sorted, labelled, and exported.

Good quality clothing is distributed to well established partners in Europe, Africa, and South America for resale. Clothing and textiles that are not fit for resale are washed and repurposed as cleaning cloths and mop heads.

Funds raised by the recycling bank(s) in our communities will be restricted to projects serving our geographical area. When there is £500 ringfenced for your area, the Association will be able to decide how it should be spent and access the money.

All the donations will be ringfenced for our geographical area with the option to:

- Access funding via a small grant to a community activity agreed with other community members on a participatory basis
- Nominate an existing group of our choice to receive funds raised

If you would like to find out more, please contact our Customer Services Team at admin@bridgewaterha.org.uk and we will note your interest.



Christmas Biscuits

Preparation time:

Less than 30 mins

Cooking time: 10 to 30 mins

Serves: Makes 36 biscuits

Ingredients:

- 100g/3½oz unsalted butter, softened at room temperature
- 100g/3½oz caster sugar
- 1 free-range egg, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 275g/10oz plain flour

To decorate:

- 400g/14oz icing sugar
- 3-4 tbsp water
- 2-3 drops food colourings
- Edible glitter

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 190C/375F/Gas 5.
2. Cream the butter and sugar together in a bowl until pale, light and fluffy.
3. Beat in the egg and vanilla extract, a little at a time, until well combined.
4. Stir in the flour until the mixture comes together as a dough.
5. Roll the dough out on a lightly floured work surface to a thickness of 1cm/½in.
6. Using biscuit cutters or a glass, cut biscuits out of the dough and carefully place onto the baking tray. To make into Christmas tree decorations, carefully make a hole in the top of the biscuit using a straw.
7. Bake the biscuits for 8-10 minutes, or until pale golden-brown. Set aside to harden for 5 minutes, then cool on a wire rack.
8. For the icing, sift the icing sugar into a large mixing bowl and stir in enough water to create a smooth mixture. Stir in the food colouring.
9. Carefully spread the icing onto the biscuits using a knife and sprinkle over the glitter. Set aside until the icing hardens.



Our Values

B

Be Customer focused

We take ownership and responsibility, are positive and engaging and put residents at the heart of everything we do.

R

Respect

We show empathy, consideration, treat everybody with fairness and value our customers and colleagues.

I

Integrity

Integrity is the foundation of Bridgewater. We will take responsibility for our actions and will display our moral conduct in every decision we make.

D

Doing what matters most, with and for, our customers

We are committed to providing quality - not just in the homes we build and maintain but also the services that we deliver, in partnership with our customers.

G

Getting it right first time

We will ensure a consistent approach to service delivery and strive to make sure that our customers experience a fast, reliable, and helpful service that aims to answer their query or sort out their problem, first time - however they choose to make

E

Enthusiastic

We go the extra mile, are passionate about achievement and eager to learn.

Bridgewater Housing Association Ltd, India of Inchinnan, Greenock Road, Inchinnan, PA4 9LH
Tel: 0141 812 2237 Email: admin@bridgewaterha.org.uk www.bridgewaterha.org.uk

[X@bridgewaterHA](https://www.facebook.com/bridgewaterHA) [f@BridgewaterHA](https://www.facebook.com/BridgewaterHA)