

# Newsletter

**INSIDE:**

- Page 2 – Supporting Our Community
- Page 3 – Landscaping Update
- Pages 4-5 – Extra Care Flats Available
- Page 6 – Updated Complaints Procedure
- Page 7 – Legal & Family Arrangements
- Page 8 – Near Me Video Pilot

Bridgewater Housing Association Newsletter for Tenants

Summer 2021 [www.bridgewaterha.org.uk](http://www.bridgewaterha.org.uk)

## Message from Chief Executive



Welcome to our latest newsletter which comes just at the time when things are getting back to some kind of normality in the country. It's packed with lots of information which we hope you will find helpful and or interesting.

It's probably fair to say that things won't ever go back to how they were pre-pandemic. Too many people have been affected in too many ways for that to happen. Like you and your families, the "Bridgewater family" have experienced; isolation, loneliness, uncertainty, illness and bereavement on a scale that none of us have ever experienced before. If you have lost someone during the past year and a half, please know that you have our heartfelt sympathy.

We lost one of our own earlier this year, not because of the pandemic. He died after a short illness. Willie Robertson was the Association's first chair, he was in his 70s when he appointed me to be the Chief Executive of Bridgewater and he died earlier this year in his 90s. He was associated with Bridgewater for over 20 years and it's no



the late Willie and Maisie Robertson

exaggeration to say that the Association would not have existed but for his tenacity and commitment. He is already being missed by everyone that knew him.

It's a cliché but these are unprecedented times and we didn't have a blue print for dealing with the kind of pandemic that we are still grappling with. Nevertheless the Board and staff at Bridgewater have done everything possible, within the constraints, government guidelines and new laws, to continue to provide as much of a service that we could.

Earlier this year we asked you about what you thought of our efforts during the pandemic to keep in touch

and about our services and some of the results of this survey are included in this newsletter. Also included are some of the things that we have been doing to help the community over and above our normal landlord and factoring roles.

Coming out of the pandemic means that there are exciting opportunities for the Association and for our services ahead. We have learned to be able to work from home over the past year and a half and some of this is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. We have also embraced new technology and digital tools more than we ever have and again this is likely to continue and we have engaged more with both our tenants and the community generally and again this is likely to continue. So there is much to look forward to. The Board will shortly consider a new Business Plan which will spell out our vision for the future of the Association and we will engage our customers in the development of that plan.

Of course, we aren't out of the woods yet and we are still dealing with restrictions imposed on all of us because of the pandemic. This means that the office is still closed and staff, for the most part, are still working from home.

We know that you have been patient with us and we are asking you to extend that patience just for a little while longer until we get to a stage where we can open the office and welcome visitors again. In the meantime you can still continue to contact us through phone, letter or e mail.

I hope this newsletter finds you in good spirits and in good health and we look forward to better times ahead.

*Ian McLean*

Chief Executive

# AGM

## Monday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021

We will be holding our AGM virtually via zoom again this year.

Only Share Members of the Association are entitled to attend and Invitations have been issued to Membership.

## OFFICE CLOSURE

Although we are now in Stage one of the Scottish Government route map out of Covid 19, our office remains closed and all our staff continue to work from home providing services to you best we can.

Staff will be taking a break from services for the September Weekend - Friday 24th September and Monday 27th September.

# SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

The Association's application as a Community Anchor Organisation (CAO) in the second round of Scottish Government funding to support communities during Covid-19 was successful with an award of over £74,000 from the Community Resilience fund. The funding period was from January 21 until the end of May 21 and was invaluable in enabling our continued partnership with RAMH and Community Action Erskine (CAE)/ EBI Unites.

## What has the funding enabled us to achieve?

- The Association, in partnership with RAMH was able to enhance our Welfare Rights Service provided to our tenants by providing advice and support to those experiencing financial hardship as a result of Covid-19, tenants struggling to pay their rent or finding it difficult to pay gas / electric bills.
- Tenants gained over £156,000 in additional income/ benefits through our Welfare Rights Service and an additional £155,000 due to the increase in this service from RAMH. In addition, RAMH were able to provide emotional support to individuals where required.
- We produced and issued a leaflet to promote our Welfare Rights Service



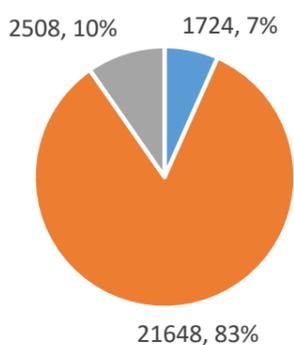
## EBI Unites

EBI Unites continued to distribute food parcels and co-ordinated support activities with help of a team of local volunteers. Food parcels soup and hot meals continued to be delivered to elderly/vulnerable tenants and residents. The Association was able to continue to provide an enhanced Welfare Rights Service providing advice and support to maximise income in partnership with RAMH. The Care and Repair Team were able to employ a temporary Care and Repair worker and cover the cost of van rental.

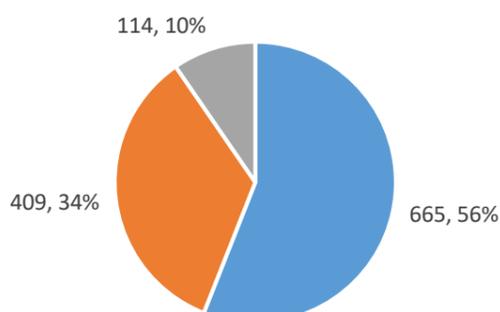
EBI Unites continued to provide the following essential support to tenants and residents mainly in the local community, however, the support was provided over 12 post code areas.

- Delivery of 25,880 parcels, including food and other essential items to families and elderly/ vulnerable residents.
- Delivery of food parcels to those in need, 3 days per week
- Provide and deliver hot meals to Elderly/Vulnerable residents 2 days per week
- Provide Welfare calls to elderly/ vulnerable residents
- Provide emergency mobile phone and power card top ups
- Cover rent and utility costs of premises
- Reimburse volunteers petrol costs for delivering throughout Erskine
- Additional output were that 3 volunteers were able to gain full time employment
- The provision of fruit and vegetables, food provisions and other activities at Barnhill Farm continued to develop with the provision of a free bus service and a family fun day which took place at the end of June 21.
- An online cookery demonstration was organised by EBI Unites in conjunction with Renfrewshire Council as part of Paisley Food & Drink Festival.

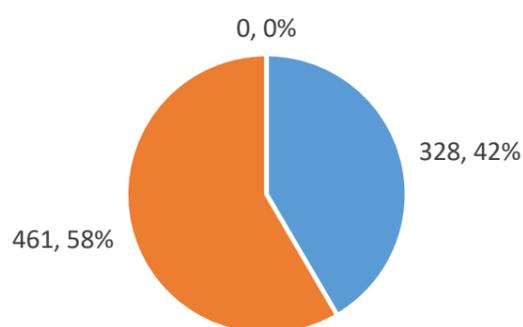
FOOD PARCELS



ADULTS



CHILDREN <16



■ ONE OFF ■ REGULAR ■ ZERO HERO

## Bridgewater tenant's feedback

"I can't thank the service enough, it's made such a difference to me and I have been able to pay off rent arrears, that I was constantly struggling with"

"I can't thank you enough, we didn't think my Mother would be entitled to anything and I would never have got round to checking or applying as I am too busy working and caring, it's been such a great help"

"the service has been brilliant, and he very much appreciated the extra support during this very difficult time for him"

"having someone to listen has been so helpful, and being able to get the kids toys to distract them a bit has been such a relief"

"Thank you so much! I will have two very happy girls when they return from school and nursery. My youngest is already subscribed to Dolly's imagination library, but again, thank you for suggesting it.

Bridgewater's help really does mean so much"

- Over 230 Bridgewater families with children 16 years and under received a £25 Morrisons voucher (1 per household equates to just under £6,000) to provide a treat to the children
- We carried out a survey of over 200 tenants in January 21 to obtain feedback on the support provided at the start of the pandemic and to obtain views on future support needs.
- 83% of tenants who responded were satisfied with Bridgewater during the pandemic
- 88% of tenants who responded felt that Bridgewater had kept you informed about the changes to services available due to Covid-19
- 94% of tenants who responded said they had been kept informed said they had obtained information on changes to services via letter

In relation to concerns or difficulties experienced during the pandemic:

- 12% stated loneliness/ isolation/ not getting out
- 12% stated not seeing family or friends
- 12% stated financial worries

The continued success of the project has been down to the drive and determination of EBI Unites, Jacqui Reid, the local organisations involved and the team of local volunteers. The aim is for the project to develop into a successful long term sustainable working in partnership to focus support to those within the community who need it most. A further funding application will be submitted and it is hoped that we can continue to provide essential Covid support to our tenants. In order to provide a sustainable model, the project will be introducing EBI Eats whereby CAE/ EBI Unites will seek a small financial contribution for food parcels and other support services they provide.

# Landscaping Update

Bridgewater's contractor Idverde has been working onsite throughout our estate areas during this financial year. They have progressed well carrying out the Summer prune while keeping on top of other issues such as weeds, grass cutting and dealing with other repairs such as drainage issues, repairing fencing and all the other day to day tasks involved in keeping our four Management Areas tidy.

Many residents will recall that our landscape maintenance activities had to be halted completely for a significant period during the first Covid-19 lockdown. The Scottish Government's guidelines at the time categorised landscape maintenance as non-essential work therefore work had to stop. Unfortunately this coincided with the start of the growing season so it wasn't long before the common grassed areas became seriously overgrown and weeds were growing out of control on pathways and in shrub beds. The start of the shrub and hedge pruning also had to be delayed leading to excessive growth. We know many residents became concerned at how unsightly the estates became and the sheer scale of the work that would be needed to return them to the high standards our customers expect. This was an enormous task and we are grateful to Idverde for committing the significant extra personnel, materials and machinery that was needed to get things back on track in very difficult circumstances.

It was brought to our attention that a Renfrewshire Council subcontractor sprayed weed killer within Bridgewater landscaped areas, leaving grass edges looking burnt and unsightly. We have been in touch with the council to advise of this damage and they have assured us that they have spoken to their contractor and this will not happen again.

The contractor has also been very busy dealing with an overgrowth of weeds which have proved resistant to any of their tried and tested herbicides. They have taken advice on this and have put measures in place to deal with the weeds with a more appropriate solution.

The Clerk of Works continues to monitor progress throughout the estate and has continued with quality control inspections on a weekly basis, and also assessing the condition of trees, remedial works, fencing repairs and a whole range of landscaping issues. Below are some photographs of the works progressing throughout the four management areas currently.

A lot of work goes into keeping the management areas tidy, well maintained and free of any situation that may be hazardous to residents. It is important to note that our landscaped areas are not suitable to be used as play spaces or for ball games and similar activities. Residents are encouraged to use the bins provided to dispose of litter and dog waste to help maintain the areas for the enjoyment of everyone.

We welcome feedback from all our residents and if you have any questions in relation to the contract please contact [factoring@bridgewaterha.org.uk](mailto:factoring@bridgewaterha.org.uk) or by calling the office on **0141 812 2237**.

Bargarran



North Barr



Park Mains 1



Park Mains 2



## Supporting Our Community - We are here to Help!

- Are you experiencing financial hardship as a result of Covid-19?
- Are you struggling to pay for your rent, food, fuel etc?
- Do you have debts?
- Would you and your household/ children benefit from having 12 months free wifi access with a digital device such as an ipad or a chromebook provided?

### Welfare Rights Service

If the answer to any of the above is YES then we may be able to help you.

Our Welfare Rights Service is provided

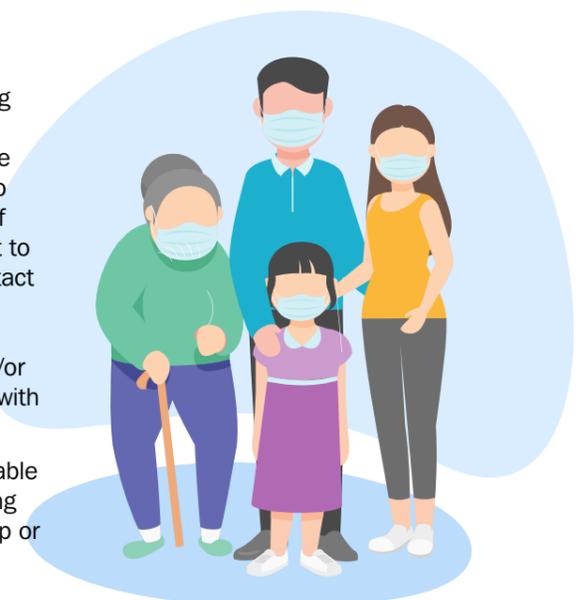
by Kay Walker, Welfare Rights Officer 3 days per week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday). However, due to the demand for the service and to reduce the waiting time for an appointment with Kay, the Association has continued its' long established partnership with RAMH. We were successful in obtaining Scottish Government funding support which has enabled us to increase the service on a temporary basis. RAMH staff are experienced in providing financial and budgeting advice and support. They can also offer a full benefit check to make sure that you are not missing out any benefits you could be entitled to and they can also help with:

- Completion of complicated claim forms and letters;
- Pursue benefit backdates;

- Represent you at appeals hearings

You can speak to Kay or be referred to a RAMH worker, subject to you providing consent for us to pass your name and contact details to them. Please note the service is confidential and is provided to assist tenants maximise their income. If you would like to make an appointment to see Kay or the RAMH team please contact Tel **0141 812 2237** or email [admin@bridgewaterha.org.uk](mailto:admin@bridgewaterha.org.uk) and leave your name, address, telephone number and/or email address and we will get in touch with you.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions we are unable to offer a home visit, however, a meeting can be arranged via Near Me, Whatsapp or Zoom.



# Extra Care Housing - Flats Now Available!



We have 2 fabulous Extra Care Developments at Robertson House and Clayson House. They are not Care Homes. Both developments are 'Extra Care Housing', which is very sheltered housing with the provision of additional care and support services. This type of housing aims to provide older people with their own home, so that they can continue to live independently with any care and support that they need coming directly to them. Normally people living in this type of housing will be 65 or over, and have a clear need for the extra support services that these facilities provide. The Robertson & Clayson House Developments in Erskine offer good quality housing, forming part of a complex with additional communal facilities; provision of meals; and a 24 hour care and support service.

## How we can help you

Extra Care Housing is an ideal option for people who need help with daily living activities and assistance with food preparation and personal care. It provides:

- Self-contained flats with their own lounge/kitchen, 1 or 2 bedrooms and a bathroom with a shower
- Access to 24 hour care and support on the basis of each individual's agreed needs
- An alarm call system for use in emergencies
- Enhanced security by controlled entry access and a full fire alarm system
- A meals service within an attractive communal dining area
- Communal lounges for people to get together





Clayson House



Robertson House

## The Benefits of Extra Care Housing

- Access to laundry facilities with washing machines and tumble dryers
- Maintenance of all shared areas including the garden and grounds
- Cleaning of common areas



## Meals

One of the services being provided is the preparation and supply of 2 nutritious meals every day - a lunch and a meal in the evening. These will be served in the communal dining area and there is a weekly cost for this part of the service.

## Care and Support Service

A team of home carers from Renfrewshire Council's Social Work Department will offer personal care, domestic assistance and housing support. This will be provided to tenants on an individual basis, based on their personal needs. The home carers will provide services 24 hours per day over 7 days per week as necessary.

A charge may apply for these care and support services depending on the income and circumstances of each tenant, but personal care services for people over 65 are provided free. A financial assessment will be carried out for each prospective tenant to give an indication of the level of charge which may apply.

## Property Service Charge

The design of each development includes a number of communal areas and facilities such as the dining room, corridors, assisted bathroom, lifts, gardens and so on. These will require being furnished, maintained, serviced and cleaned as appropriate. In addition we need to make some provision for future renewal of furniture and equipment.

The cost of this is covered by a monthly service charge payable by each household.

## Housing Benefit

Tenants can apply for Housing Benefit to assist with the cost of the rent. The amount of benefit awarded will depend on the level of the rent and the amount of money coming

into the household plus any savings tenants may have. In addition the number and ages of other people living in the house will be taken into account.

## How to Apply

Anyone interested in being considered for the tenancy of an extra care flat within the Robertson and Clayson House Developments should complete an Extra Care Housing Application Form which can be obtained from the Association's website at [www.bridgewaterha.org.uk](http://www.bridgewaterha.org.uk).

For further information please contact Helen Goode, Housing Assistant on Tel No: **0141 812 2237**.

## Applicants from out with Renfrewshire

If you live outside of the Renfrewshire Council area, your local council may be required to fund the care and support services provided. We will discuss this with you further if your application is successful.

## Assessment

All applications will require to be assessed to determine whether applicants need the level of care and support provided by extra care housing. This will be done in conjunction with Renfrewshire Council Social Work Department. All applicants will be informed whether they qualify for this type of housing, care and support.

# CONNECTING SCOTLAND Phase 4



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot



Renfrewshire  
Council



Connecting Scotland is a Scottish Government funded programme set up in response to coronavirus by helping people access online services and support they need whilst keeping family and friends in contact.

Each local authority is allocated devices and Bridgewater submitted an application to Renfrewshire Council. Our application June 20 for Phase 1 which covered elderly/vulnerable tenants was successful and we were awarded 15 iPads, 5 Chromebooks and 20 free Wi-Fi access and we provided these to elderly/vulnerable tenants who met the criteria.

We are delighted to report that our applications for Phase 2, 3 and 4 of the project which covers families were also successful and we were awarded another 35 iPads, 5 Chromebooks and 30 free Wi-Fi access which have been distributed to tenants who met the eligibility criteria.

The initiative enables us to provide an appropriate internet enabled device such

as iPads or Chromebooks plus access to a mobile hotspot and 12 months free data with support to develop digital skills for people who meet the eligibility criteria:

- digitally excluded – do not have an appropriate device and/or are not connected to the internet at home
- on low incomes so cannot afford to buy a device or pay for internet access

And ARE EITHER:

- a. Households with children or where a child is normally resident (this includes pregnant women with no child in the household: OR
- b. Care leavers up to the age of twenty-six (in line with eligibility for aftercare support

If you feel you meet the criteria and are interested in applying for a device, please contact your Housing Officer who will complete a referral form or email [admin@bridgewaterha.org.uk](mailto:admin@bridgewaterha.org.uk). This will enable us to estimate demand should there be future funding.



## Updated Complaints Procedures

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) has introduced updated Model Complaints Handling Procedures (MCHP's).

As our complaints procedures are based on the MCHP, we have updated our complaints procedures to take account of the changes. These changes took effect on **1 April 2021**.

The main changes we have introduced are as follows:

- A new category of "Resolution" has been introduced. This allows us to resolve a complaint by agreeing any action to be taken with the customer, without making a decision on whether or not to uphold a complaint
- We will now agree the points of complaint and outcome sought with the complainant at the

start of any Stage 2 complaint. Where the points of complaint and outcome sought are clear, this will be done by setting these out in the complaint acknowledgement letter.

- The six-month timeframe to make a complaint also now applies where the customer wishes to escalate to Stage 2 because they are unhappy with the Stage 1 response.
- Internally, we must now share relevant parts of the complaint and response with any staff members complained about. At Stage 2, staff members must be given information about the complaint process and support available, and kept updated on any timeframe extensions.
- We will respond to complaints made on our own social media channels by signposting complainants to the complaint process and support available.



## School clothing grants and school meals Reminder

Applications are open for School clothing grants if your child is registered for next academic year.

Any queries should be direct with Renfrewshire Council 03003000300.

# PLANNING LEGAL & FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS

Have you thought about planning legal and family issues later in life? Some people leave it until it's too late when they could have taken steps earlier on the important decisions in life.

## What is a power of attorney?

A power of attorney (PoA) is a written document giving someone else authority to take actions or make decisions on your behalf. This could be to deal with your financial affairs and / or welfare matters, not just about money/ property. It could be used in the future if you become incapable. Nobody likes to think that they may not be able to look after themselves, but accidents or illness can happen to anyone.

The PoA details the names of the people, known as attorneys, who you want to help you, and lists the individual powers that you want them to have. The PoA will also state when your attorneys can begin acting.

## What does incapable mean?

Your capacity could be impaired gradually or suddenly as a result of an accident or illness. A registered and licensed medical doctor will be able to say whether you are incapable or not.

No one has an automatic right to take actions on your behalf without legal authority. If you are unable to make decisions about your affairs, your family or friends may have to go to court to get the authority to act on your behalf.

## Who can I appoint as my attorney?

You can appoint anyone you want, over the age of 16. This could be a family member or a friend, a solicitor or accountant, or a combination. It's usually a good idea to have more than one attorney or maybe what is called a substitute attorney to step in if your attorney can no longer do things for you.

You can appoint someone to deal with your financial matters and someone different to deal with your personal welfare.

It is good practice to discuss with the person you want to be your attorney what being an attorney actually involves. It will be helpful if you keep a note of the matters discussed and give your prospective attorney a copy too. Although, it's your choice who to appoint, you cannot appoint someone who is currently declared as bankrupt to deal with your financial and property affairs.

## How or where would I get one?

Any local solicitor should be able to assist you to draft a PoA and provide legal advice on the matter. Alternatively, some companies and stationery shops sell PoA packs.

## How much does it cost?

A professional may charge you to draw up a PoA and prices vary. The PoA should include a certificate signed by a practising solicitor or medical doctor. The certificate is needed to confirm that you are capable of understanding the PoA. You might be charged a fee for this service. A fee will also be charged to register the PoA with the Office of the Public Guardian (Scotland).

## Where can I get further help or information?

Age Scotland helpline 0800 12 44 222

The Age Scotland helpline provides information, friendship and advice to older people, their relatives and carers.

Citizen Advice Bureau 0800 028 1456

You can call Scotlands Citizens Advice Bureau for advice or visit your local bureau or see their website [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland)

There is lots of useful information on the website of the **Office of the Public Guardian (Scotland)** or you can phone if you prefer. The office is open to the public but please contact to make an appointment.

**Office of the Public Guardian (Scotland)**  
Telephone: 01324 678300

Hadrian House  
Callendar Business Park  
Callendar Road  
FALKIRK, FK1 1XR

Email: [opg@scotcourts.gov.uk](mailto:opg@scotcourts.gov.uk)

[www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk)

Opening hours: 9am - 5pm Monday-Friday



# HOW TO PAY YOUR RENT OR COMMON CHARGES



Download our Bridgewater Housing Association app, or you can pay using Allpay's app\*, both available for iOS and Android.



If you have access to online banking you can pay using our bank account number 00139327 and sort code 83-26-22. Remember to use your customer account number as the payment reference.



Phone the allpay 24-hour automated telephone line on 0330 041 6497.

Pay Online using our Website: [www.bridgewaterha.org.uk](http://www.bridgewaterha.org.uk) or scan the QR code.



Pay with Cash or Debit/Credit card by presenting your allpay Card at any Post Office or PayPoint Outlet.

TENANTS can set up a regular Direct Debit with us or set up a Standing Order with their bank.

# Low Income Pandemic Payment

The low income pandemic payment is a one off payment of £130 to help with the increased costs and lost income due to coronavirus.

## Who can get it?

Anyone who received council tax reduction in April 2021.

## Eligibility

- Households are eligible to receive the payment if they satisfy the criteria for at least one day during the period between 1 April 2021– 30 April 2021.

- The criteria is that they are in receipt of CTR, including Second Adult Rebate (SAR), or that they are exempt or have no liability for Council Tax on the following basis:

- all the occupants are under 18
- all the occupants are care leavers
- all the occupants are severely mentally impaired

## How to Claim

Renfrewshire Council will issue letters shortly to those they have identified as possible claimants.

A second letter will also be issued with instructions on how to claim.

## When will payments be made?

Payments will be made by end of October 2021.

If you only became entitled to council tax reduction after a backdated claim was made payment will be made by end of November 2021.

Claimants will be given option of money being paid directly to council tax account.

# Young people urged to apply for Job Start Payment

Social justice secretary Shona Robison has urged eligible young people to apply for Job Start Payment if they are starting a new job after a period of unemployment.

Eligible 16-24-year-olds, who have been on certain benefits for six months or more, can apply for the one-off payment worth £252.50, or £404 if the applicant has children. The payment will help with the costs of starting a job including travel, new clothes or childcare. People can apply for Job Start Payment for up to three months after their start date.

# Please Don't Feed the birds!

It can be tempting to leave food out for birds, particularly when the weather gets colder, but it can create problems for other residents. Wild birds like crows and seagulls, and even feral pigeons soon catch on to where and when food is being left out regularly. They will find a perch to sit, wait and watch and then fly down when the well-minded resident puts out bread and scraps. They may also create nests in nearby roofs if they believe there will be a regular food source available.

Unfortunately, the 'perches' they use are often window sills, gutters and railings where they leave droppings for other residents to clear



up. There are also animal welfare concerns too. Often food left out for birds are leftovers, like stale bread, which can be harmful to some species and can also encourage vermin like rats, cockroaches and even foxes. We would always discourage this and recommend the use of bird nut dispensers in nearby woodland for example, to help wild birds get through the winter. We would ask all residents to refrain from leaving out scraps and leftovers.

If you want to help birds at various times of the year there's some excellent advice and information available at The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' website, which can be found at: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/at-home-and-abroad/scotland/>

# Staff News

On 11 June, Graham Collins retired from the Association's Care & Repair Team. Graham was employed as a Project Officer and started in 2000 with Care & Repair when they were based at the offices of the then Paisley South Housing Association. He transferred to Bridgewater along with the rest of the Care & Repair Team in 2001 and has provided help to hundreds of disabled people to adapt their homes in that time. Graham's farewell from the staff was, unusually via Zoom and we all wish him a long and happy retirement. We've postponed the night out until restrictions lift and will make sure he's given a proper send off.

# Near Me Video Appointments Pilot

In February 2021, the Scottish Federation of Housing Association (SFHA) introduced the housing sector to Near Me, a secure, web-based video appointments service that is available for use by all social landlords, large and small.

The public sector license made available through the Scottish Government enables local authorities, housing associations and co-operatives to use Near Me for free until at least 2023. This means that landlords can now offer their tenants an additional, video call option for accessing services e.g., housing management, viewings/assessing reported repairs, welfare benefit advice etc.

Bridgewater is one of a number of pathfinder organisations who are piloting the Near Me. Lorraine

Kay, Housing Support Coordinator explained "We decided to trial Near Me in our Housing Support Service (sheltered housing) to engage with our sheltered tenants through face-to-face calls initially to reduce isolation and loneliness. During the pandemic, staff have been working from home and have been carrying out enhanced welfare calls via the telephone to tenants. Having now experienced the platform, video calls enabled us also to have a visual check in whilst carrying out welfare calls. We will also be able to use it for support plan reviews which are currently being carried out over the phone. Having the video call option will enable family members to be involved in reviews, too".

While we are working towards returning to the office, the video calling platform will become a valuable part of the service for those who wish to communicate by this method. Bridgewater

is committed to providing opportunities for tenants to maximise the benefits digital technologies can bring – which was why we were one of the first social landlords to sign up to the Technology Enabled Care (TEC) in Housing Charter.

The housing support staff have been trialling the platform and having some fun along the way. It is still early days, but we have already carried out a number of video calls to tenants. Feedback from the tenants has been very positive. There were no complications, they felt that it was easy to join the call, and they would be interested in more video calls.

Initial reactions from staff are that it is easy to join a call with no need to set up an account, however, we are still learning all the aspects of hosting calls.

I can also see wider benefits for



staff – I carried out the video calls, and it was a pleasure to be engaging with our tenants through this format as during covid there have been few face to face visits.

This is an ideal tool for us and, as such, our intention is to roll it out next to our welfare rights and housing management services too.

Bridgewater Housing Association Ltd, First Floor Bridgewater Shopping Centre, Erskine PA8 7AA

Tel: 0141 812 2237 Email: [admin@bridgewaterha.org.uk](mailto:admin@bridgewaterha.org.uk)