



Longer-term funding for improvement plans

A new four-year funding package will allow the Association to build on the initiative to buy and repair some of the poorest quality housing in Govanhill.

The £34 million funding by the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council, which was announced in February, will enable the Association to acquire and improve up to 350 affordable homes as part of the South-West Govanhill Property Acquisition and Repair Programme.

The Vice Chairperson of the Association, Annie Macfarlane, said: “This four-year funding commitment recognises the need for a longer-term approach to tackling the issues that exist in the area. Of the 124 housing association properties bought to date, over 60% are from private landlords. This reflects our successful efforts to take housing into the social rented sector, while also maintaining existing tenancies.

“As a community controlled and owned association, we will continue to work with local people, involving them in the programme to ensure we achieve its aims – better living conditions in the area, reduced overcrowding and more effective property management and maintenance. The long-term approach needed in Govanhill requires continued support from the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council.”



Association Vice Chairperson Annie Macfarlane with Bailie Philip Braat and Housing Minister Kevin Stewart

Making the announcement, the Housing Minister, Kevin Stewart, and the Leader of Glasgow City Council, Frank McAveety, said the funding would help to bring about real improvements to the area.

Benefit changes – get advice about your rights



Tenants have been urged to get in touch with the Association for advice about further changes to the benefit system.

The most significant change affecting Association tenants is a reduced level of the benefit cap, which took effect in January. The cap limits the amount of housing benefit paid to those of working age who have a weekly income from benefits above a specified level.

The Association's Welfare Rights Team has contacted affected tenants to discuss whether they could be exempt from the cap. Tenants have also been given help with applications for discretionary housing payments, to ease hardship caused by this change.

A further change, which is to be introduced this April, is the limiting of entitlement to tax credits, housing benefit and Universal Credit to a maximum of two children. In other words, any third or further child born after 6 April will not be included when assessing entitlement to these benefits.

As with the new level of benefit cap, there are exceptions to the two-children rule. Tenants affected by either of these changes, or who need further information, should contact our Welfare Rights Team for advice.

The Association will keep tenants informed about future planned changes to the benefit system.

Welfare Rights Team

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Paul McCormack
(Welfare Rights Officer)
0141 636 3651

David Kelly
(Welfare Rights Officer)
0141 433 2143

Julie Brooks
(Welfare Rights Assistant)
0141 636 3686

Shamim Ahmad
(Welfare Rights Assistant)
0141 636 3627

Rent Advice Team

.....

Gordon Black
(Senior Housing Officer)
0141 636 3624

Sandra Murray
(Housing Officer)
0141 433 2141

Avril White
(Housing Officer)
0141 636 3662

Judith Rennie
(Housing Officer)
0141 636 3653

Lesley McSkimming
(Housing Assistant)
0141 636 3647

Loraine Jennings
(Housing Assistant)
0141 636 3672

Govanhill meets Gruffalo at book festival

Wee writers from Govanhill have been urged to “keep up the good work” by actress and comedian Elaine C Smith.

Children from St Bride’s and Holy Cross primary schools met the celebrity at the Wee Write! book festival in the Mitchell Library after she read a Glaswegian translation of The Gruffalo.

The actress heard how the pupils had been writing stories as part of the Govanhill Community Development Trust (GCDT) and Glasgow Life family learning partnership, telling them: “That is excellent – keep up the good work!”

The children also took part in the interactive story-telling show, Macastory’s Myths! Magic! Mystery! They tried on costumes used in the show and were shown what goes on behind the scenes at the festival.



Govanhill pupils and their parents with actress Elaine C Smith, Loraine and Noreen at book festival

GCDT ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Tutor Loraine McHendry and Glasgow Life Family Learning Officer Noreen Campbell have been leading educational activities in Govanhill primary schools for children and parents to learn English and integration skills together.

Afternoon tea invitation for older tenants

Older tenants are invited to afternoon tea with the Association.

The afternoon tea event, which is supported by a donation from construction company CGC, is intended to thank Govanhill tenants aged over 60 for staying with the Association, and give them the opportunity to meet and catch up with each other. The Association has more than 500 older tenants.

The event, which takes place on Monday 27 March in Samaritan House, will also support research that is being carried out locally with older people.

Govanhill is one of only three neighbourhoods in Glasgow that is part of the international Place-Making with Older Adults project, which aims to explore how communities and neighbourhoods can support older adults to age at home and in their communities, to prevent people experiencing loneliness and isolation.

Those who take part are asked:

- What is it like to live in Govanhill?
- What do you like/dislike about Govanhill?
- How would you like to improve it?

The need for older people’s voices to be heard is particularly important at a time of cuts to local authority services.

For more information about the project, go to www.placeage.org/en/home.

For more information about the afternoon tea event, contact Tenant Participation Officer Jennifer Ferguson on 0141 636 3668.



Below-inflation rents set for next year

Following consultation with tenants, rents for 2017/18 are to be set at below the current rate of inflation.

The Management Committee agreed at its March meeting that rent levels would go up by 2% in the year ahead.

The decision took into account the results of a consultation exercise and comparability exercise. The Management Committee is required to base its decision on the affordability and comparability of our rents, while ensuring that the Association remains viable and able to meet our legal and regulatory requirements.

Chairperson John McLardie said: “Setting the rent rise at below the rate of inflation recognises the significant pressures that remain on household budgets.

“The issue of value for money has been a priority for the Association and was a key feature of our first tenants’

conference in October.

“The new rent level was set after careful consideration and is in line with the Association’s business plan.”

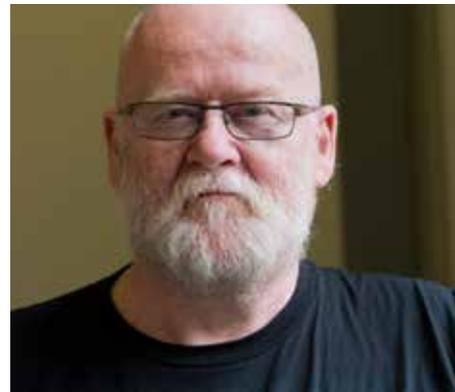
The consultation with tenants was based on whether rent should increase by October’s retail price index (RPI) – which then stood at 2% – plus a further 1% or a further 2%.

Overall, tenants supported an above-inflation increase. However, while those who received full or partial housing benefit were most strongly in favour, tenants who pay their rent in full themselves were opposed.

The latest published RPI, in January this year, was 2.6%

Notice of the new rate will be given to tenants and the rent increase will take place on 28 April. The factoring management charge will also increase by 2%.

If your rent is paid in full or



Association Chairperson John McLardie

part by housing benefit, the Association will notify Glasgow City Council of your new rent. If you are in receipt of Universal Credit, it is your responsibility to notify the Department for Work and Pensions of the increase on 0345 600 0723.

If you are not currently receiving any help with your housing costs or wish to obtain further information, please contact our Rent Advice Team or our Welfare Rights Team through our reception on 0141 636 3636.

You can pay your rent to us in a number of ways



Allpay card

- At a post office – you can pay by cash, cheque or debit card
- At an outlet displaying the PayPoint logo
- By phoning Allpay on 0844 557 8321

Pay online using Allpay

Go to www.allpayments.net.

PayPoint

Rent payments can be made in the Post Office or any shop displaying a PayPoint sign. Simply present your payment card with the money you wish to pay.

Debit card

You can make a payment with your debit card via Callpay by

phoning a member of staff in the Rent Advice Team.

Bank

If you wish to pay by direct debit, telephone banking, internet banking or standing order, please contact the Association’s Rent Advice Team.

New affordable homes plan for Govanhill

The Association is in discussions over £3 million plans for a social housing development at a former church in Govanhill.

The proposed development in Inglefield Street would create 22 one-bedroom to four-bedroom flats over four storeys, with associated amenities and on-street car parking.

The Association has held discussions with construction company CCG (Scotland) and their architects, MAST, over developing the site previously occupied by Our Lady of Consolation RC Church, which was demolished in 2014. A planning application has been submitted to Glasgow City Council.

John McLardie, Chairperson of

Govanhill Housing Association, said: “The Association is always looking at opportunities to provide modern, sustainable and affordable social housing that meets the needs of the community.

“As with our new-build site currently under way at the corner of Victoria Road and Butterbiggins Road, this site at Inglefield Street offers the potential for the Association to add more new, energy-efficient housing to its existing stock and complements the other regeneration work we are undertaking in South-West Govanhill.”

Plans of the proposed development are available in the Association’s offices at Samaritan House. If anyone would like to discuss the

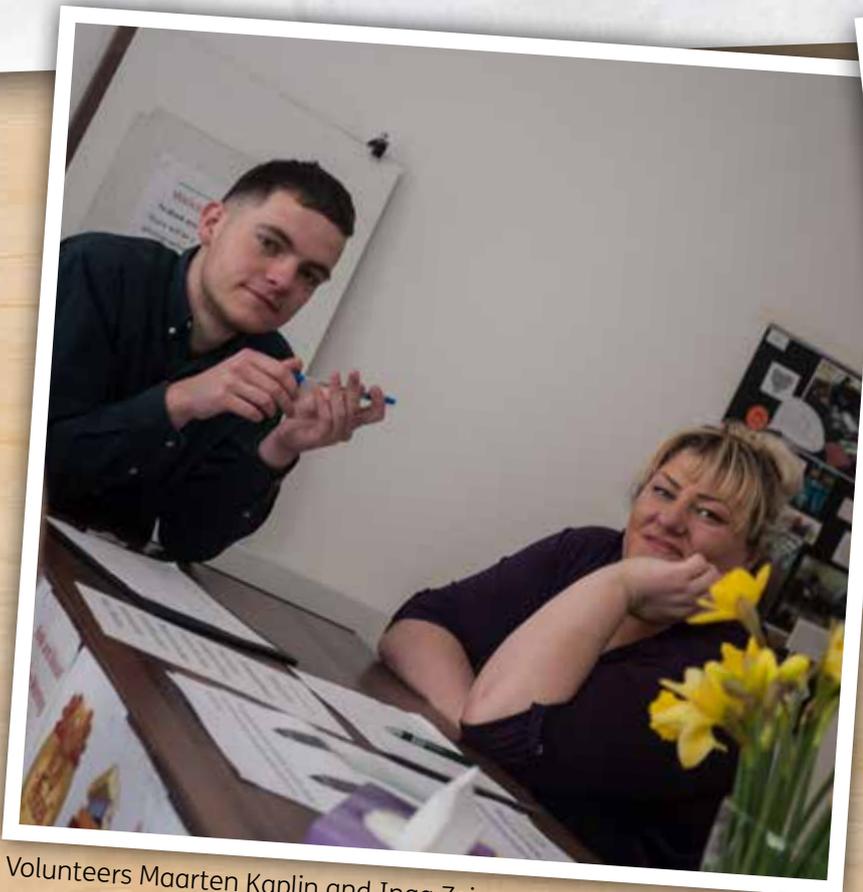
plans in more detail, please contact Development and Regeneration Services on 0141 636 3684 to arrange an appointment.



A week at the Govanhill community information shop

The GCDT community information shop at 192 Allison Street, which opened in December, was initially proposed by Govanhill residents at a meeting of Govanhill Community Action. It has a number of purposes, including:

- Reporting centre – if you have issues related to housing, local services, or want to report an issue via a third party, we will support you with this. All issues will be passed on to the relevant authorities – the Association, council, police, or others – anonymously if required.
- Signposting – Govanhill has lots of incredible organisations offering a huge array of supports and services. Come in and we can help you find the support you need or give you information about what's available.
- What's on – come in and find out what's happening in the community.
- Support services – currently, Jobs & Business Glasgow, the police and Children 1st offer services and supports for local people.
- Volunteering – find out about local volunteering opportunities, register as a volunteer and get training.



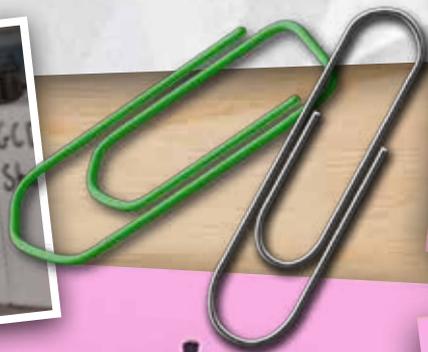
Volunteers Maarten Kaplin and Inga Zaiceva at the community information shop

The shop is open Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm. For more information, and details of surgery times, contact Ruth Plummer, Volunteer Coordinator, on 0141 423 8883 or 0141 423 2142. Visitors are welcome.



Anyone coming in before Saturday 8 April – the date of our next litter pick – will be entered into a free draw to win a Fitbit Flex.

Govanhill Information shop



Monday

A number of local residents drop in to enquire about volunteering opportunities – some register and sign up for volunteer training. Other visitors ask for more information about the Association's new funding to acquire and improve properties in South-West Govanhill. Jobs & Business Glasgow come in the afternoon and support a number of local residents who have made appointments to discuss how to get back into work.

Tuesday

Martina, Govanhill Community Development Trust's Slovakian Community Development Worker, is here to support local residents with everything from translating letters, to explaining the school registration process, and making referrals for energy audits from South Seeds. Jobs & Business Glasgow are back in the afternoon, helping local people with job applications and interview skills. A couple of students carrying out a research project drop in to ask some questions.

Wednesday

Officers from Police Scotland are here for their fortnightly drop-in, offering a chance for local people to discuss concerns, report issues or ask questions. Later, some local residents come in to ask if the Association could take on the factoring of their close, while also reporting an issue with a leaking overflow pipe in their backcourt.

Thursday

Sorana, GCDT's Romanian Community Development Worker, is here for the day to support Romanian clients, including working with local organisations to help a family facing illegal eviction. Mairead, our student placement, and Volunteer Coordinator Ruth are working with some local residents to develop a map of local services.

Friday

Around 30 people have turned up for our first coffee morning drop-in – more than we expected so the place is jam-packed. In the afternoon, staff are busy preparing for a litter pick on Saturday, getting the kit ready and making sure everything is in place. Where did the week go?

Major repairs programme – information for tenants

Window and kitchen replacement work is at the heart of the Association's £4 million major repairs and planned maintenance programme for 2017/18.

The work, which will also involve replacing some older heating systems, will help to promote energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty among tenants.

Around 370 homes will benefit from the replacement of older, single-glazed windows with new, high-performance, double glazing. Approximately 100 older kitchens and 150 heating systems will also be replaced.

Replacement windows are planned for tenants at:

Phase 7 – work due to start February 2017

8, 12, 16, 18, 28, 36, 40, 50, 62, 68, 72 Langside Road
76, 81, 82, Coplaw Street
83 Cuthbertson Street

Phase 8 – work due to start April 2017

3, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17 Carfin Street
458, 466, 474, 482 Cathcart Road
66, 72, 96 Govanhill Street

Phase 9 – work due to start February 2017

353, 361, 369, 377, 381 Allison Street



595, 603, 613 Cathcart Road
258 Hollybrook Street

100 Langside Road
12, 16 Riccarton Street

Phase 10 – work start date to be confirmed

362 Allison Street
256 Calder Street
541 Cathcart Road
143, 145 Coplaw Street
178 Cuthbertson Street
9, 13, 15 Govanhill Street
364, 372, 380 Govanhill Street
237 Hollybrook Street
65, 67, 71, 73, 93, 95 Inglefield Street
179 Kingarth Street

North Govanhill – work start date to be confirmed

424 Allison Street
339, 345, 351, 357, 363, 369, 375, 381, 387 Calder Street
83, 87 Dixon Avenue
35, 37, 39 Dixon Road
348, 356 Govanhill Street

Replacement kitchens are planned for tenants at:

Phase 1 – work due to start February 2017

5, 11, 12, 18 Annandale Street
146, 150, 158, 160, 162, 164, 166, 170 Butterbiggins Road

Phase 2 – work due to start March 2017

165, 169, 173, 181 Calder Street
142, 146, 150 Coplaw Street

For enquiries about the Association's major repairs and planned maintenance programme, contact Development and Regeneration Services on 0141 636 3684.

Language and literacy success for students

A total of 24 students of ten different nationalities have graduated from a course to improve language and literacy skills.

The English for Speakers of Other Languages classes, which help learners into work or college, were held by Govanhill Community Development Trust (GCDT) in association with City of Glasgow College.

The students who graduated in February were from Pakistan, India, Italy, Iran, Iraq, Slovakia, Lithuania, Nepal, Afghanistan and Syria.



One of the classes of English language and literacy graduates with tutor Fiona Beattie

Language and literacy students were also awarded certificates at GCDT's end-of-year celebration in December. More than 200 people

attended the meal, ceilidh, awards ceremony and Santa's grotto in the former Govanhill Trinity Church.

Tenants – it's good to talk

Participants in the Association's first tenants' conference have decided – it's good to talk.

Following the successful conference last autumn, tenants are planning a monthly coffee evening at Samaritan House to keep the conversation going, or just get to know their neighbours and find out what else is going on.

The next open session is on Wednesday 21 March from 6pm to 8pm in the community hall. Further coffee evenings will be held on Tuesday 18 April and Tuesday 16 May.



The Association's first tenants' conference was held in October

MERGE Welfare – Praise for support from volunteers and community

Support for the MERGE Welfare tenants and residents organisation from volunteers and the community was praised at the group’s annual general meeting.

The turnout at the MERGE – Minority Ethnic Residents’ Group Empowerment – Welfare AGM in January was described as “fantastic”.

Delivering the keynote speech, Chairperson Rabia Pervaiz thanked volunteers and the community for their exceptional support, despite operating in a challenging financial environment. She went on to say partnership work was crucial in maintaining the values of the group.

The speakers also included long-standing group member Abdul Rashid, who delivered a comprehensive presentation on the aims and objectives of MERGE Welfare.

At the end of the AGM, the audience was invited to relax with a short yoga session, which was tutored by Grace MacFarlane. This was a taster session – with a focus on having fun – to illustrate what the MERGE group is about – bringing the heart and spirit of the community together.



Chairperson Rabia Pervaiz and Treasurer Tahira Razaq at the AGM

Young achiever’s world of stories

Budding author Azeen Asif’s story-telling skills have helped her win a Young Achiever award.

The 11-year-old, who is in P7, was nominated for Cuthbertson Primary School’s Young Achiever in the Community award partly for her talent at story telling. She has written about a supply teacher who came in with new fun ways of learning, like playing hopscotch. Her latest story is about a dancer who breaks her leg but still helps other young people to dance.

Azeen says her ambition is to be a writer, adding: “You can go into a different world. You decide what’s going to happen.”

As well as English, Azeen also enjoys maths, sport and dance, and has just taken part in a week of outdoor activities at Blairvadach with her classmates.

Azeen says a big thank you to her parents and teachers for all their help.



Azeen receives her award from Management Committee member Ghazala Hakeem

G.LITTER PICK

YOUR MONTHLY COMMUNITY LITTER PICK IN GOVANHILL NEEDS YOU!

12-2PM EVERY SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

- 8th April + Banner Making Workshop
- 13th May
- 10th June
- 8th July
- 12th August
- 9th September
- 14th October
- 11th November
- 9th December

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Govanhill Housing Association, Samaritan House,
79 Coplaw Street, Glasgow G42 7JG

Please Contact Us At: Freepost Better Living

General Enquiries: 0141 636 3636 • Fax: 0141 636 3685

Web: www.govanhillha.org • Email: checkin@govanhillha.org

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