



Primary Pupils Urge Residents to bin their Rubbish

A group of children from Annette Street Primary School have been working hard to find solutions to the problem of litter in Govanhill. The Annette Street Eco Committee and Pupil Council have designed posters to encourage proper usage of Govanhill street bins. Both posters were put to a public vote through the Govanhill Housing Association Facebook Page, the school and the GCDT Community Support Centre on Allison Street.

The project is a collaboration between Govanhill Housing Association, Glasgow City Council and Annette Street Primary School.

When asked what impact the children want the posters to have, Eco committee member, Armani (8) says 'I want people to put the rubbish in the bin to make our world better'.



The winning design by the ECO committee, coming soon to bins in the Govanhill area

Alishba (6) from the Pupil Council said 'I want people to put their stuff in the bin so they don't make a mess'.

The winning design will be attached to bins in Govanhill from late summer.

What's on: Dates for your Diary!

1st – 11th August: Govanhill International Festival and Carnival (see page 5)

20th August: Govanhill Housing Association Summer Sessions (see page 12)

September: Time to Apply For Cash for Kids Grants

7th September: Community Garden Fun Day

14th September: Merrylee Open Day

4th October: Tenancy Sustainment Event

11th October: Cash for Kids application deadline

Cuthbertson Primary Children say Look After your Neighbourhood

Children at Cuthbertson Primary School have been learning about waste management and the environment through interactive sessions with our back-court engagement officer **Cristina**. The children learned about the consequences of littering and fly tipping, participated in a litter pick in Govanhill Park and took part in a gardening workshop. Following the sessions the children took part in a competition to look after their own back courts for 4 weeks, with permission from their parents. Part of this involved engaging with family, friends and neighbours to get involved in cleaning and maintaining communal spaces.

When the 4 weeks were up we asked the children what they did in their own back courts:

'I was speaking with my neighbours about the garden and was litter picking with them'

Firaaz

'My dad helped me cut the grass, I watered all the plants and picked up the litter after the BBQ'

Gurtha



'I have wrote a letter to my neighbours, planted peas, flowers, cucumber etc. I even tidied my garden, the only thing that is left is trimming'

Shawal

MERGE Group Celebrate EID in Style

On the 1st of July the Minority Ethnic Residents Empowerment Group (MERGE) held a family Eid celebration filled with food and laughter. Group members brought food, and dressed to impress. Over 50 local people came along to celebrate the end of Ramadan and a great time was had by all.



Rent Matters: Where to go for Help and Advice

Getting into rent arrears can be distressing but most problems with rent arrears can be sorted if early action is taken. If you are experiencing difficulties please contact your Housing Officer who will discuss your circumstances with you and agree a repayment plan.

- Judith Rennie 0141 636 3653 jrennie@govanhillha.org
- Sandra Murray 0141 433 2141 smurray@govanhillha.org
- Avril White 0141 636 3662 awhite@govanhillha.org

Make sure you are claiming everything you are entitled to

We also provide a free expert Welfare Rights Service so if

you wish help to apply for any welfare benefits or would like a benefits check to ensure you have applied for all benefits relevant to your circumstances please contact:

- Saima Akhtar (Universal Credit Claims) Welfare Reform Officer

0141 433 2140
sakhtar@govanhillha.org

- Paul McCormack Welfare Rights Officer 0141 636 3651 pmccormack@govanhillha.org
- David Kelly Welfare Rights Officer 0141 433 2154 dkelly@govanhillha.org

Ways to Pay

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 Callpay on 0844 557 8321 (please have your Allpay card to hand)

Pay online using Allpay

- Go to www.allpayments.net
- Download Allpay App

Pay by Direct Debit

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



LORD'S TAVERNERS
Giving young people a sporting chance

WICKETZ



FREE CRICKET SESSIONS

MORE INFO: Nauman Javid, Cricket Scotland:
naumanjavid@cricketScotland.com / 07889 585381



WHEN: Every Sunday (2.00 - 3.00pm) - starts 9 June
VENUE: Glasgow Club, Holyrood, 110 Dixon Road. Glasgow G42 8BA
WHO FOR: Boys and girls aged 8-16
WHAT TO BRING: A drink (not fizzy) and a snack



Come along to your local Wicketz hub, make friends, have fun and stay healthy!

New Management Committee Member Takes the Opportunity to make a Difference

Joining the management committee was a no-brainer for new committee member Celine

Celine and her wife have been tenants of the Association since February when they moved to Govanhill from the East End.

They were living in a privately rented flat in an area with high levels of anti-social behaviour, a situation which was causing both a great deal of stress. Since they have moved they have found Govanhill Housing Association to be a lifeline, and have really appreciated support from staff and knowing that there is somewhere for them to go if they have any issues.

Celine volunteered to join the Management Committee to gain experience and skills, as well as to give back to the community.

‘When someone suggested I join the Management Committee I thought – what have I got to lose? For me it was a no brainer.’

‘As a disabled LGBGTQ woman I have a lot of life experiences that can be brought to the table.’

Celine grew up in a very diverse suburb in Paris, and immediately felt at home in Govanhill.



‘Govanhill is a place where things are happening, it is a busy, culturally rich community and the Housing Association creates connections within that community’

‘I thought, this is an opportunity to make a difference, and improve the quality of life for other people.’

‘If we work together to make a better life for ourselves, everybody benefits. We’re all here in this together’

As well as being on the management committee Celine is interested in crochet and crafts and has two cats who enjoy looking out at the trees and birds.

A Busy Summer for Tenants and Residents in Merrylee!

Merrylee Registered Tenants Organisation (RTO) and Cathcart Baptist Church held a ‘gardening for beginners’ event at the end of June to encourage local people to be more involved with the garden competition, and to brighten up local verandas. With local expertise on hand from the Merrylee Allotment Society, a dozen planters were filled in no

time. They should all be blooming lovely by now!

The RTO also took the coffee morning group to Troon for the day in June for lunch and some shopping, and a seat beside the sea. And they did a community litter pick. June was a busy month.

The committee starts meeting again from the 15th of August. If any local issues have cropped up



over the summer, please let them know. Email mrandto@gmail.com or visit Merrylee Residents & Tenants Organisation on Facebook.

Govanhill Housing Association Business Plan: The Vision for Your Association



The Business Plan is the main way that the Association makes plans for the future. It sets out our aims, what we will do to achieve these, and how we will pay for our plans.

Vision and future direction

Everyone living in Govanhill and Merrylee should:

- *Enjoy good quality, warm, safe and affordable housing that contributes to their health and wellbeing and to community pride*
- *Live in a neighbourhood that is clean and well cared for, with excellent neighbourhood services and opportunities for all.*

Strategy

In setting the strategy we have given careful consideration to the external challenges the Association may need to manage in the years ahead. Not least, the impact that Universal Credit will have on our tenants and the Association's income, and continued uncertainty about Brexit. The Association will manage these risks by ensuring that we have strong governance and financial management, to achieve the best outcomes possible for our tenants and for the Association Our priorities are;

Consolidating and improving our core business, through service improvement and investment

Achieving growth, by acquiring and repairing poor quality housing and through new housebuilding

Managing our assets and resources well, for the benefit of our customers and communities

Working with the community and others to improve opportunities and the quality of life for local people

The Association wants to see continued positive change in Govanhill and Merrylee, and we are starting from a strong position. For example, we have:

- A committed and experienced Management Committee and staff team.
- Positive partnerships with tenants, community groups, Glasgow City Council and other public bodies.
- Good, and improving, results for service delivery and for tenant satisfaction with our services.

- A strong track record in investing in tenants' homes, and in maximising tenants' incomes.

In the last year, GhHA has been designated as the community anchor organisation for Govanhill's Thriving Place initiative to regenerate the area. This is a welcome confirmation of the leadership role we play in the community, and we continue to work closely with our subsidiary company, Govanhill Community Development Trust

BUSINESS PLAN ACTION LIST

The Association's performance in meeting the Scottish Social Housing Charter (the standards all social landlords must meet) continues to improve, along with increases in customer satisfaction levels.

We are also aware that there are areas where

tenant satisfaction is lower, for example the condition of closes and back gardens and the financial pressures many tenants face in paying their rent.

Our priorities for 2019/20 are shown in the sections below

Repairs and Housing Services

In 2019/20, the Association will:

- Aim to achieve the following targets for the repairs service

	Target for this year
Average hours to complete emergency repairs	2 hours
Average working days to complete non-emergency repairs	5 days
Percentage of reactive repairs completed right first time	95%
Percentage of properties with gas safety record renewed by the anniversary date	100%
Percentage reactive repairs appointments kept	100%

- Spend 18.7% of our total income from rents and service charges on repairs and maintenance.
- Put out to tender our gas servicing and maintenance contract and our roof maintenance contract.
- Invite contractors to tell us how they could improve current service standards if they are appointed.
- Aim to re-let empty homes more quickly.
- Build on the introduction of our new repairs & maintenance contract to review processes and use technology such as handheld devices to improve our services to tenants.
- Continue our efforts to control build-ups of bulk items in backcourts.

Housing Investment

- Invest around £2.8 million in major repairs, with a similar level of spending in each of the next 5 years

The programme priorities for component replacement over the next 3 years include:

- Replacing 30+ years old windows with new, high performance, double glazed timber windows

- Kitchen and bathroom renewals
- Central Heating/Boiler replacements
- Smoke and fire alarm upgrades
- Major void upgrades, to increase energy efficiency and to take up opportunities to carry out amalgamations/reconfiguration works where appropriate.

Rents and affordability

In 2019/20, the Association will:

- Continue to seek ways of keeping future rent increases as low as possible.
- Complete our rent setting review including how we should set rents for different sizes and types of property, making sure tenants are fully involved in the process.
- Continue to provide expert support in Welfare benefits as more tenants move onto Universal Credit.
- Use the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to calculate inflation when next year's rents are being set. CPI is generally lower than the inflation calculation we used in previous years.

Investment in new homes

In 2019/20, the Association will:

- Invest in our next new build housing development at 159 Butterbiggins Road (due to go on site in early 2020) to provide 24 new homes
 - The next project, together with the two recently completed developments, provide a total of 88 new homes, including homes for people whose needs cannot be met in the traditional tenements, such as larger families, older people and wheelchair users.
- We will consider further development opportunities on their merits as they arise. There are competing demands on the Association's cashflow during the next five years, so we will consider viability and sustainability carefully before committing to new developments.

Tackling poor housing conditions in South West Govanhill (18 tenement blocks)

This programme is supported by £34 million funding from Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government over the period 2017 - 2021. The Association will continue to purchase properties in South West Govanhill and carry out an appropriate level of works, which may be internal works; more comprehensive major repairs, common works and internal works; or common repair schemes. All refurbished properties are

offered on an affordable, social rented basis.

In 2019/20 the Association will:

- Seek to purchase a further 60 flats
- Seek to complete internal improvements and repairs to around 100 of the flats already acquired
- Establish the Association as Factor in around 10 additional tenements.

Paying for the Association's priorities

The Business Plan demonstrates that, with close monitoring and careful management, the Association has the financial resources needed to deliver its strategy; will be financially viable over the next 30 years; and will be able to meet its loan covenants.

Our ambitious programme of investment in major repairs, South West Govanhill and new

developments means that annual cash flows are projected to be negative until 2022/2023, and will then become mainly positive for the remainder of the 30-year projections. The cashflows have also been tested to take account of a range of future scenarios, some internal to Govanhill and some that reflect external risks and uncertainties such as increases in inflation and interest rates.

Links between the Business Plan and tenants' priorities

In our 2017 Customer Satisfaction Survey, three issues stood out as being the most important to tenants:

Having a good quality repair service

Performance results for the repairs service have improved steadily over the last three years despite the average number of repairs per property increasing. Tenant satisfaction has also improved, particularly on the time taken to complete repairs and being able to

book an appointment to have repairs carried out. We will make further improvements to our repairs and housing services in the coming year – please see the Business Plan Action List for more information.

Improving tenants' homes

The Business Plan proposes an investment programme of c. £2.8 million each year.

See the Business Plan Action List for more information about what we plan to do in the coming year.

Charging Affordable Rents

We know this is a source of concern for tenants, because the cost of living has been increasing faster than wages and benefits.

The Business Plan is based on a policy of annual rent increases of inflation (Consumer Price Index) plus 1%, apart from 2019/2020 which has been restricted to a CPI-only increase on the understanding that this will delay some of the home improvements planned in our major repairs expenditure. The Management Committee has been able to approve “inflation only” rent increases in each of the last three years and it will continue to look carefully at what can be achieved on a year-to-year basis.

We have examined the feasibility of “inflation only” increases, but this is not possible as a long-term policy for several reasons:

- Our cashflows would be negative every year, with a cumulative deficit of £19.7 million by year 30

- If the Association were to borrow more funds to cover these shortfalls, we would break the conditions of our existing loan agreements, probably resulting in significant financial penalties.
- Major repairs spending would be unsustainable at current levels (£2.8 million per annum).
- There would be a financial shortfall of £47 million by the end of the Business Plan period (30 years).

We are also currently conducting a review of our rent policy and structure during 2019/20. This will seek to harmonise our rent levels for similar accommodation, improve transparency and fairness, and address affordability pressure points.

For more information about our work on rents and affordability in the coming year, please see the **Business Plan Action List**.

Cash for Kids Grants Available to help with Cost of Christmas

Cash for Kids grants help families on low incomes with the cost of a Christmas Treat for children. Funding is awarded to help pay for Christmas presents, Christmas dinner, winter clothing.



If you are a GHHA Tenant with one or more children aged **15 year or younger** as at 24th Dec 2019 and are on a low income or in receipt of benefits you could be eligible for a grant.

Look out for the Poster in your close in **mid September** inviting families into the office to make an application. **All applications need to be registered with GHHA on or before 11th October** which is why we are raising awareness this early in the year.

Don't Miss! GCDT Highlights at the Govanhill International Festival and Carnival

From the 1st to the 11th of August GCDT will be hosting a number of events as part of the Govanhill Festival and Carnival. The full programme can be found online at <https://www.govanhillbaths.com/festival/> and all of our events can be found on the Govanhill Community Development Trust Facebook.



'South City Way' continues apace

The **South City Way** is Glasgow's ambitious project to provide a high quality, active travel corridor from Queen's Park to Trongate, with dedicated cycle tracks, enhanced spaces for pedestrians and numerous community projects along its length. The project is being taken forward by Glasgow City Council and the sustainable transport charity Sustrans, working closely with local stakeholders.

Completed so far

2018 was a successful year for the project, seeing the completion of phase 1 of the route from Queen's Park to Queen's Park Station last summer.

Phase 2 construction began immediately afterwards, from Cumberland Street to Eglinton Toll and then from Eglinton Toll to Coplaw Street. These works are now nearing completion.

A new public greenspace was established at Cavendish Street with crocus, daffodil and iris bulbs blooming during the spring. Cavendish Street will also be the location for a new public artwork, to be installed later this year.

Phase 3 of the project (Victoria Rd) is currently underway and is expected to be complete in early 2020. It will link phases 1 and 2 together, providing a continuous route from Queen's Park to Cumberland Street.

Keep up to date with

development news at: <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/scw>

Community Grants



Alongside the construction work, Sustrans and GCC have also awarded over £100,000 to a wide range of local groups to deliver a range of projects in the local community to encourage walking, cycling and use of the new public spaces. Learn more here:

<https://www.showcase-sustrans.org.uk/news/south-glasgow-fund-boosts-local-organisations/>



South Seeds Saturday Gardening is Growing at the Community Garden

Every Saturday from 10am to midday the Govanhill Community Garden hosts drop in gardening sessions run by South Seeds. These sessions give an opportunity for you to come along ask questions, learn skills and get involved in growing your own vegetables.

South Seeds Gardener Joe showed us around the beds which have a wide variety of vegetables from peas, to beetroot to other lesser known plants such as borridge and camphor, which is used to make into fertiliser.

All members of the community are invited to join; Saturday morning gardening will be



running until October so there is still time to come along, have a cup of tea and get involved. Just drop in any time after 10.

Freedom of Information Act Extended to Housing Associations.

As of the 11th of November this year, Registered Social Landlords including Govanhill Housing Association, will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). This follows a proposal put forward to extend the coverage of FOIA legislation and an extensive consultation process.

Housing Associations are currently exempt from FOIA; this change in legislation will bring Housing Associations in line with local authorities.

This means that anyone will be able to request access to certain information that we hold. There are exemptions to this and more information about those, your rights and the legislation can be found on The

Scottish Information Commissioners website which is linked below.

www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/YourRights.aspx

We are in the process of making sure we are best prepared for the introduction of the legislation by publishing more information on our website www.govanhillha.org.

This is not be confused with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to which we are already subject, and which allow you to request copies of any information we hold about you. If you wish to know more about that then please contact Chris Mochan, Information Officer on 0141 433 2157.

Fantastic Response to Rent Restructure Survey!

The Association is considering changing the way rent is charged, and has commissioned housing consultants Arneil Johnston to ensure that tenants' voices are heard at every stage of this process.

The reason for this restructure is to ensure we have a charging system that is simple, fair and consistent. It will replace and improve our current, complicated process and ensure that nobody pays more than they should.

During May we sent letters to all tenants with a survey and received a great response. The next stage in this process is for our independent consultants to analyse the data and gather more detailed information from tenants at a series of consultation events.

More information about this will be available at the Govanhill Summer Sessions Event on the 20th August. This will include a presentation which will cover the context and aims of the rent restructure process. It will also give you a chance to ask any questions you may have.

Towards the end of August and beginning of September members of staff from Arneil Johnston will arrange a series of focus groups which will give tenants another opportunity to be involved in the design of our new rent setting structure. If you would like to be invited to attend these focus groups, please contact us on **0141 636 6363** or by emailing **checkin@govanhillha.org**.



Timeline: How you can have your say in our rent setting process

- Rent Setting Survey sent out to all tenants so that the widest number of residents can share their views on how our rents are structured.
- Focus Groups and Consultation Events are held.
- Using the views and information given by tenants in our rent survey and at consultation events, Arneil and Johnston will provide a number of options for restructuring our rent setting processes to the Management Committee to consider.
- Management Committee make final decision on the changes to our rent setting processes, and how these changes will be implemented.
- We communicate the results of the changes and how they will impact you.

Congratulations to John, Phyllis and Brian who were the winners of our prize draw competition!

Govanhill Housing Association to Hold **Summer Sessions**

Come along, share your ideas and tell us what you think!

On the 20th of August the Association will host Summer Sessions - a conversation event to bring tenants together, to share their views on different aspects of how the Association is run.

The event will run two sessions; each of which will feature world café style discussions on a range of topics including Equalities and Human Rights, Rent Restructuring, Customer Service and Performance Standards and how we communicate important information.

The event is an ideal opportunity to learn about the Association, meet your neighbours, share your views and listen to the views of others.

All attendees will also have the opportunity to be entered into a free prize draw.

The event will start at 3pm however, you are welcome to attend whenever you are able; the first workshop session will be repeated at 6pm for those unable to attend during working hours.

Date: 20th August

Location: The Community Hall, Samaritan House, 79 Coplaw Street.

Programme

15:00 – 15:15: Welcome and Address by the Association Director

15:15 – 17:00: Discussion Sessions

Participants move around different tables, each workshop leader sets the context and sparks a discussion on the following topics.

Equalities and Human Rights, Rent Restructuring, Customer Service and Performance Standards, Tenant Participation Strategy, and how we communicate important information

17:00- 18:00: Food and presentation of community awards.

18:00 – 19:30: Discussion Sessions (a repeat of Session 1 for those who wish to attend a later session).