

GOVANHILL NEWSLETTER



The Newsletter of Govanhill Housing Association

Summer 2022

Samaritan House and Merrylee Offices **Now Open**



We are in the process of extending our office opening hours for in person callers. The reception area at **Samaritan House** is currently open on **Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays** from **10:00-12:00** and **13.30-15:30** and we will continue to expand these hours as soon as we can. Please keep an eye on our community notice boards and our social media or ask staff for the most up to date information.

From **20th of July** the **Merrylee Office** will also be open on **Wednesdays, Thursdays** and **Fridays** from **09:00-12:30**.

You will be able to come into the office and make an appointment to see a staff member if required.

Cost of Living Crisis: Speak to us if you are struggling

We know that this is a difficult time for everyone, and that many members of our community are particularly vulnerable.

If you are worried about money, please speak to your housing officer or a member of our welfare rights team. We can signpost you to local sources of support which may be of assistance.



Welfare Rights Team

Make sure you are claiming everything you are entitled to by seeking advice from our welfare rights team. Please phone **0141 636 3686** or email **welfarerights@govanhillha.org**

Govanhill Housing Association Launches Education Bursary

If you, or a member of your household are a tenant of Govanhill Housing Association and are planning to attend college or university you can now apply for a grant of up to £200 to help with your expenses.

It does not matter what course you are planning to attend; all we ask is that you complete a short application form which is available to download on our website.

The form asks a few questions about how the money will benefit you as well as confirmation of the course you are taking. The funding does not require to be paid back and can be used on anything that would reasonably support your study.

The deadline for applications is the 31st of August.



Download a form at [Govanhillha.org/downloads](https://govanhillha.org/downloads) or email checkin@govanhillha.org. Paper forms can be collected from reception during opening times if required.



Free Bus Travel for Under 22s!

All young people under the age of 22 who live in Scotland are now eligible for free bus travel.

To travel for free, you need a National Entitlement Card (NEC) or Young Scot National Entitlement Card (Young Scot NEC). It is operated by Transport Scotland who pay bus operators for each journey made. Each journey needs to be recorded electronically, which is why you need an NEC or Young Scot NEC to travel.

How Do I Apply

You can either apply online at getyournec.scot or (if your child's school uses it) on parentsportal.scot. If you're applying online, you may find it useful, before starting the application process, to download or look out the documents as outlined on getyournec.scot that you will need.

If you are aged 16-21 you must apply for a new NEC yourself.

A parent or guardian must apply on behalf of 5-15 year olds and provide approval for them to travel for free by bus. Children under 5 years old do not need a card as they already travel for free on commercial bus services.

If you cannot apply online you can contact Glasgow City Council 0141 276 0727 • youngglasgow@glasgowlife.org.uk
For more information visit <https://freebus.scot/>

Meet our New Head of Finance and IT David Robb

I am the Head of Finance and IT at Govanhill, which sounds dull, but really isn't. Working in finance management you learn a lot about strategic planning and general management skills.

Before working at Govanhill Housing Association I spent 9 years working for learning disability charities and then moved to Blairtummock Housing Association in the East End.

I was attracted to working at Govanhill Housing Association partly for the challenge. There are so many different things going on here, including development, the South West Govanhill Project – as well as a very mixed tenant profile which makes for an interesting place to work.

It is a concerning time for everyone now with inflation set to reach 11%, we know many

of our tenants will be struggle with this and the cost of living in general. What I would say is that it is important to make yourself as employable as possible, and if anyone is in any way inclined towards numbers, they should consider accountancy training. You don't need to go to university, many firms have accountancy apprenticeships, which are useful as you can be earning straight away. Finance can sound dull, but most jobs have routine aspects. Working in finance is also very rewarding, and working at somewhere like Govanhill Housing Association you know you are contributing to a social good.



When I think about my hopes and aspirations, I think of my children. I tell them that if they have done their best, that is all we ask of them and they should be content with their best effort.

That is my hope for this job, and the Association in general, that we do our best.

Rent Restructure to go Ahead in 2023

In 2018/19 we commissioned an external consultant to independently review our rents. The purpose of this was to make sure that our rent charges are as fair as possible across our housing stock.

The outcome of the restructure will see most tenants paying less rent, 70% of tenants will see a decrease in the rent that they pay.

Unfortunately, implementation of this work was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, however the Management Committee agreed that the restructure should be implemented in early next year. All tenants will receive detailed information about this re-structure and what it means for your rent. We will also be running information sessions between August and January.

Please keep a look out for more information in the post, on our website and social media channels.



Governance Special: Who Runs Govanhill Housing Association?

Govanhill Housing Association is community controlled this means that a committee made up of local people has the ultimate responsibility for the strategic direction of Govanhill Housing Association.

On a day-to-day basis operational work of the Association is the responsibility of the staff team under Director John Quinn. The Management Committee is made up of a majority of tenants and everyone on the committee lives within our areas of operation. This means that our work is lead by people with a real interest in the community in which we operate.



Who are the Management Committee?

The Management Committee are elected by members of the Housing Association every year at the Annual General meeting. Sometimes people are 'co-opted' on to the Management Committee between AGMs, and later elected. The role is a voluntary and unpaid.

Anyone who is a member of the Association apply to be on the Management Committee.

Details of our current Management Committee members can be found on our website here govanhillha.org/about-us/governance/.

How do I become a member of Govanhill Housing Association?

Anyone who shares the aims of Govanhill Housing Association can become a member by filling in a very short form and paying the £1 membership fee. All members receive a copy of the annual report and are invited to attend the AGM.

How does the Management Committee Operate?

The Management Committee have regular meetings (generally monthly with a break in summer) – prior to meetings committee members are presented with papers outlining various regulatory considerations, or issues where decisions need to be made. The Management Committee has several sub-committees such as Tenancy Services, Audit & Risk etc. These committees work closely on specific aspects of the Association's work.

How Can I Find Out More About the Work of the Management Committee?

Minutes of all Management Committee meetings are uploaded to govanhillha.org as soon as they are approved. You can find them at govanhillha.org/about-us/downloads/ along with other important policies, strategies, and documents.

Meet the Management Committee

Audrey Flannigan has recently joined the Housing Association Management Committee, though she has been an active participant in community life for decades. We spoke to her to find out a bit more about her involvement in the area, and her experience of joining the Association Committee.



Can you tell readers a bit about yourself, what is your connection to Govanhill?

I grew up in the area around Eglinton Toll and Govanhill was where we hung about as teenagers. I moved away from Govanhill in my late teens and early twenties but I continued to worship in the area at Elim Church. I went on the Housing Association list and was offered a flat in December 2019, I moved in to the flat in February 2020.

People may know me from the local Foodbank, I manage the South East Foodbank which is based at the Elim church and have done for the last 12 years.

With such a long connection to the area you must have seen some real changes.

There have been a lot of changes yes! Not all of them good. When we opened the foodbank in 2011 and joined the Trussell Trust we were number 99 in the UK, now there are 1200. There was a shift when the Government changed the benefit system and started to impose sanctions, and it has just got worse since then. My first year at the foodbank we fed 700 people, last year we fed 10,700 people in the South East of Glasgow.

I think the area is on the cusp of regeneration now, which you can see in the new houses at the Larkfield Bus Station.

What would you like to see improve in the area?

I am full of all the usual gripes! There is far too much litter, and some back courts are badly kept. I sometimes think this area is particularly bad because there are so many of us living here in a small space.

I would like to see a cleaner, healthier Govanhill, an area where poverty rates are far lower than they are just now.

I would like to see more funding for Primary Schools in the area, such as access to Pupil Equity Funding – or just more funding in general.

I would also like to see more Social Housing, and the Association promoting the benefits of a socially rented home.

Can you tell us about your experience of joining the Housing Association Management Committee?

I know Jennifer, who was the Tenant Participation Worker as we had done some work together at the Elim Church. She asked me if I would be interested in joining the Management Committee and I said yes.

I am a big believer in the fact you can't change things from the outside, real changes happen on the inside. There's no point in complaining unless you are going to get involved, which is why I joined.

Once you get involved and join the committee you realise the constraints and pressures that the Association is under.

Gathering Equalities Data

In 2021 the Scottish Housing Regulator published guidance that Housing Associations must follow in relation to gathering equality data. Although we were already collecting equality data in different ways we will now issue an annual “Equalities Monitoring Form” to all tenants every year to gather this.

This form will come to you via a text message and via the post.

We would ask that all tenants complete this form as soon as they receive it. We are collecting this data anonymously and no data you will provide will be linked back to you or stored within your tenancy file.

Why are asking for equality information?

We collect equality information to help us to plan and deliver effective services and to meet our legal and regulatory obligations.

The collection of equality data is important in encouraging equal opportunities.

What do we do with equality information?

We use equality information for a range of purposes, including to help us to:

- protect and promote your rights and interests
- promote equality objectives across our services
- identify and address our customers' needs, and improve our services
- identify and eliminate any form of discrimination.

Do you need to answer every question?

No. However, we ask that you complete as many as you are comfortable with.

By answering as many questions as possible you will help us meet your needs better. We will provide options throughout the form to allow you to provide only the information you want to give us. You can complete some questions and not others or you can complete parts of questions. The form has space for you to tell us more about your needs if you want.

What types of questions will be included in the form?

The form will cover questions linked to protected characteristic and ask things like age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Are the answers I provide anonymous?

Yes – the answers you provide are completely anonymous and will not be linked back to you in any way.

We are keen to get feedback from tenants on this form before we issue. If you have any spare time and would be free to review this form please get in contact with Claire McGraw, Head of Tenancy Services on **0141 636 3636** or email **cmcgraw@govanhillha.org**



Patches Under Review

The way we organise our staff team is changing; some tenants will find that they have a new Housing Officer from August onwards. Look out for a letter in the post that will give full details of any change, as well as contact information for your new Housing Officer.

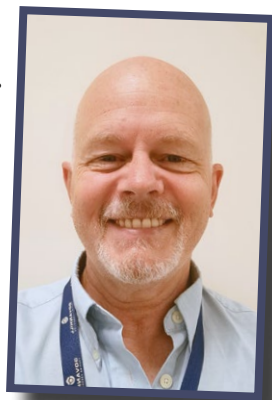


A day in the life of... a Housing Officer: Philip Smith

I am a Housing Officer in the Housing Services Team. My role is varied, and I work on every aspect of housing provision.

On a typical day I will deal with a considerable number of enquiries, emails and telephone calls from existing tenants, former tenants, housing applicants, colleagues, and other agencies on every aspect of housing in Govanhill and Merrylee.

Like all my colleagues, the way I do my job has changed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. My duties have remained unchanged however our approach to managing workload is different.



Being unable to have face to face meetings has been one of the most difficult aspects of the pandemic. Using online platforms to speak to customers was not always ideal.

When I am not working from home, I can be found in Samaritan House or on my patch (housing term for area that housing officers work in)

My day is varied. I might be carrying out accompanied viewings with prospective tenants, signing up new tenants or dealing with estate management issues such as neighbour disputes, anti-social behaviour and bulk / refuse issues. Some of these issues are still taking longer to resolve than they previously did, however I am hopeful that this will improve and our staff remain on hand to deal with your issues and enquiries.

Govanhill Housing Association Factoring Service: What you Need to Know

Factoring services relate to all the common areas of a building, whether that is the close, the back court, the stair or the fabric of the building such as the roof, rainwater goods and external walls. As factor, Govanhill Housing Association aims to provide a quality, customer-focused factoring service that offers value for money, meets good practice standards, and complies with legal requirements.

What are the key elements of our Factoring Service?

- Customer liaison including phone calls, emails, letters, queries, complaints and meeting with owners
- Arranging maintenance and repair of the block common parts
- Arranging services for the common block parts (such as back court maintenance and stair cleaning)
- Liaising with contractors
- Estate management
- Arranging a block buildings insurance policy for factored stock
- Managing accounts including sending invoices, taking payments, setting up Direct Debits for customers, credit control and providing owners with updates on their accounts
- Providing information to solicitors in the event of changes in ownership

What is not included

- Any repairs or maintenance within owners' properties
- Missed Bin Collections
- Fly tipping on the Street

To report a missed bin collection, or fly tipping contact Glasgow City Council at glasgow.gov.uk or phone 0141 287 1058. Should you have any bulk items for uplift please contact Glasgow City Council for details of their service

<https://glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=20545>

MEET OUR TEAM

Heather Batchelor:

Factoring Officer - 0141 636 3673



Heather has worked for GhHA since 2011 and is the Factoring Officer for our factored stock in the following locations:

All GHHA factored units in Merrylee, Allison Street (even nos.), Annandale Street, Annette Street (even nos. except no. 44), Bankhall Street (even nos.), Boyd Street (odd nos.), Butterbiggins Road, Calder Street (odd nos.), 434-490, 583-589, 593-599 and 607 – 675 Cathcart Road, Coplaw Street (except properties forming part of Coplaw Court), Cuthbertson Street (even nos.), Daisy Street (odd nos.), Dixon Avenue, Garturk Street (even nos.), Govanhill Street, Hickman Street (odd nos.), Hollybrook Street (even nos.), Inglefield Street (even nos.), Jamieson Street, Jamieson Court, Langside Road (even nos.), Preston Street (even nos.), Riccarton Street (even nos.), Seath Street (even nos.), South Annandale Street, Westmoreland Street (even nos.).

Matthew Cameron:
Factoring Officer - 0141 636 3635



Matthew started working for the Association in 2019 as Property Assistant in both the Maintenance and Factoring Teams. Matthew has been in the post of Factoring Officer since 2021 and he covers all our factored stock in the following locations:

Aikenhead Road, Allison Street (odd nos.), Annette Street (odd nos. plus no. 44), Ardbeg Street, Ascog Street, Batson Street, Bennan Square, Bankhall Street (odd nos.), Boyd Street (even nos.), Brereton Street, Calder Street (even nos.), Carfin Street, Cathcart Road (all except 434-490, 583-589, 593-599 and 607 – 675), Coplaw Court, Cuthbertson Street (odd nos.), Daisy Street (even nos.), Dixon Road, Garturk Street (odd nos.), Hickman Street (even nos.), Hollybrook Street (odd nos.), Inglefield Street (odd nos.), Langside Road (odd nos.), Preston Street (odd nos.), Riccarton Street (odd nos.), Seath Street (odd nos.), Victoria Road, Westmoreland Street (odd nos.).

Ruby Khosla: Factoring Assistant

Ruby has worked in several roles at the Association. As the first point of contact for customers, Ruby manages the incoming email box and telephone calls.

Ali Watt: Factoring Assistant

Ali has recently joined the Association as part-time Factoring Assistant and provides administrative support to the team.

Sandy Thomson:
Factoring Manager



Sandy joined the Association in 2017 as Factoring Manager and oversees all the work of the team.

How to contact us

Email – The Factoring Team has a shared mailbox **FactoringTeam@govanhillha.org**. This mailbox is checked regularly during working hours (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays except bank holidays)

Telephone

The main Factoring telephone number is **0141 636 3666**. You can call this number to report or discuss any factoring issues.

Reporting Common Repairs

Common repairs can be reported during working hours **on 0141 636 3669 or 0141 636 3634**. Any out of hours emergency common repairs should be reported to **Pointer Alarms on 0141 552 8647**. Non-urgent and non-emergency common repairs can also be reported via our website: **govanhillha.org/contact-us/report-a-repair/**

The Association takes your issues to our Elected Representatives

Every quarter the Association meets with our elected representatives to raise issues of concern to tenants and the Association. These meetings include our Director and Chair and occasionally other staff and committee members. These meetings give us the chance to raise concerns about the neighbourhood which have been brought to our attention by staff, tenants, or members of the community.



The last meeting took place on June 10th. We raised the following:

Bulk Uplift Charges

Many of our tenants have raised the fact that they simply cannot afford the £35 charge, which is leading to fly tipping and tensions between neighbours.

Vermin and Fly Tipping

Pests, fly tipping and irresponsible private landlords remain an issue in the area. We raised this with the elected members.

Social Housing Tenants picking up the cost of bulk removal

It is often difficult to identify where bulk waste has come from in a close. When our contractors attend to remove bulk waste in a mixed close, the Association is likely to be paying for bulk removal for owner occupiers and private landlords. We do not think that your rent should be spent on removing bulk, any money we spend on this we are unable to spend on improving properties and making them more energy efficient.

What we wanted to achieve from the meeting

- We wanted the elected representatives to attend a walkabout of the neighbourhood to see these issues for themselves
- We asked for the pull-out bin service to be resumed
- We want our staff to be able to report bulk on the My Glasgow App

Meeting Result

The Elected Representatives committed to a walkabout of the area. This took place on Thursday the 30th of June. We took Elected Representatives around a number of particularly bad backcourts and made them aware of the challenges faced by the Association and our Tenants. A follow up meeting is taking place in mid- August to discuss and agree what action is needed. If you want to share anything with us regarding the environment please do get in touch by phoning the usual office phone number.

Contacting your elected representatives

The next elected representatives meeting will take place in September; however you do not have to wait till then to raise a concern with your local elected representatives. If you want to contact your local councillor or MSP please find their details below.

Elected Representatives Govanhill Area

MP Alison Thewliss

Scottish National Party
0141 552 7117
alison.thewliss.mp@parliament.uk

MSP Nicola Sturgeon

Scottish National Party
Phone: 0141 424 1174
Nicola.Sturgeon.msp@parliament.scot

Local Councillors

Councillor Alexander Belic

Scottish National Party
0141 287 4610
07747 118 407
alexander.belic@glasgow.gov.uk

Councillor Dr Soryia Siddique

Scottish Labour Party
0141 287 5625
07881 282 640
soryia.siddique@glasgow.gov.uk

Bailie Elaine Gallagher

Scottish Green Party
0141 287 4466
elaine.gallagher@glasgow.gov.uk

Bailie James Scanlon

Scottish Labour Party
0141 287 7034
james.scanlon@glasgow.gov.uk

Elected Representatives Merrylee Area

MP: Stewart McDonald

Scottish National Party
0141 632 5043
stewart.mcdonald.mp@parliament.uk

MSP: James Dornan

Scottish National Party
0141 632 5238
James.Dornan.msp@parliament.scot

Local Councillors

Councillor Stephen Curran

Scottish Labour Party
0141 287 4382
07900 134 416
stephen.curran@glasgow.gov.uk

Councillor Sean Ferguson

Scottish National Party
0141 287 5854
07795922928

Bailie Leòdhas Massie

Scottish Green Party
0141 287 5644
leodhas.massie@glasgow.gov.uk

Merrylee Registered Tenants Organisation Needs You!

Do you live in or near to Merrylee? Are you keen to improve your local community, meet new people and get involved with the Association? The Merrylee Registered Tenants Organisation are looking for new members. If you are interested, please contact Claire McGraw at cmcgraw@govanhillha.org.



Women On Wheels

'I would say, just put your fear aside and come talk to us – someone will probably have the same fears you do. Many of us here have had barriers and it hasn't all been plain sailing. If you are at all interested in getting on a bicycle come along and chat to us'

Women on Wheels are the newest tenants at Govanhill Workspaces, and they are on a mission to normalise cycling for all women. We spoke to founder Shgufta Anwar about the organisation.

'Women on wheels exists to encourage women to take up cycling, whether that is for transport, health and mental wellbeing or leisure or for the pure joy of it!

We want to enable women to overcome any barriers that they have and completely normalise women's cycling.'

The idea had been brewing for a while and we know there is a real need for it, so rather than wait for the right moment or the perfect funding we had a virtual launch on International Women's Day, got this premises at the workspaces and are now in our third week of delivering the project.



For more information:

 womenonwheels.org.uk
 facebook.com/womenonwheelsSCIO
 twitter.com/WomenonWheels_
 instagram.com/women_wheels/

As well as our regular programme we will be running cycling related one-off events such as talks, creative workshops, film screenings & more!



Programme

All activities and events are offered on a “pay as you can” sliding scale to match your circumstances. All income generated helps Women on Wheels deliver activities to get more women cycling.

Bicycles, helmets and safety gear is provided.

MONDAYS

Tea & Coffee Drop-in: 9:30AM - 2:30PM. Pop in and see us over refreshments and chat all things cycling.

Learn to Ride Group Lessons suitable for complete beginners or those who cannot pedal:
10-11AM & 6:30-7:30PM £0-10

Confidence Building Led rides for anyone wishing to cycle in a group or increase their confidence:
11:15AM-12:45PM & 7:45-9:15PM £0-15

SATURDAYS

Learn to Ride Group Lessons: 2-3PM £0-10

Confidence Building Led Rides: 3:15-4:45PM £0-15

Bookable on Request by contacting us on community@womenonwheels.org.uk or **07927357140**

One to One Lesson

Suitable for complete beginners or anyone wanting to get back on a bike. £0-30p/h

Bike Buddies Route Planning

If you're looking to plan a commute route, our team can map out a cycling friendly journey & test it with you to build your confidence getting from A to B. £0-30p/h

Maintenance Classes

Join a class to learn how to do roadside repairs. £0-10p/h.

Care and Repair:

Free Handyperson Service for Disabled and Older People



Glasgow
CARE & REPAIR

Care and Repair is a free service for over 65s and disabled people of any age in Govanhill. It is operated by Southside Housing Association.



Who is Eligible?

- Households where everyone is over the age of 65
- Disabled people of any age (in receipt of qualifying benefits).

What is included

Handyperson Service

- Hanging Curtains
- Change lightbulbs and toilet seats.
- Installing wireless doorbells/ fire alarms/changing batteries
- Supply and fit key safes for easy access for family or carers
- Fit shelves, grab rails, towel rails, bannisters etc.
- Prepare the home for any works that are about to take place.

Home and Hospital Service

- Prepare the home for a return from hospital
- Assistance at home to prevent admissions to hospital.

Advice and Information

- For factored owners who might need support with works, finding contractors and agreeing terms and monitoring the progress of works.

What to Expect

- All staff and volunteers have been carefully selected and have undergone Disclosure Scotland checks.
- All staff and volunteers will have photographic ID cards
- You will be advised when to expect a visit to your home
- A password system will be used by the Handy person.

How to Access this Service

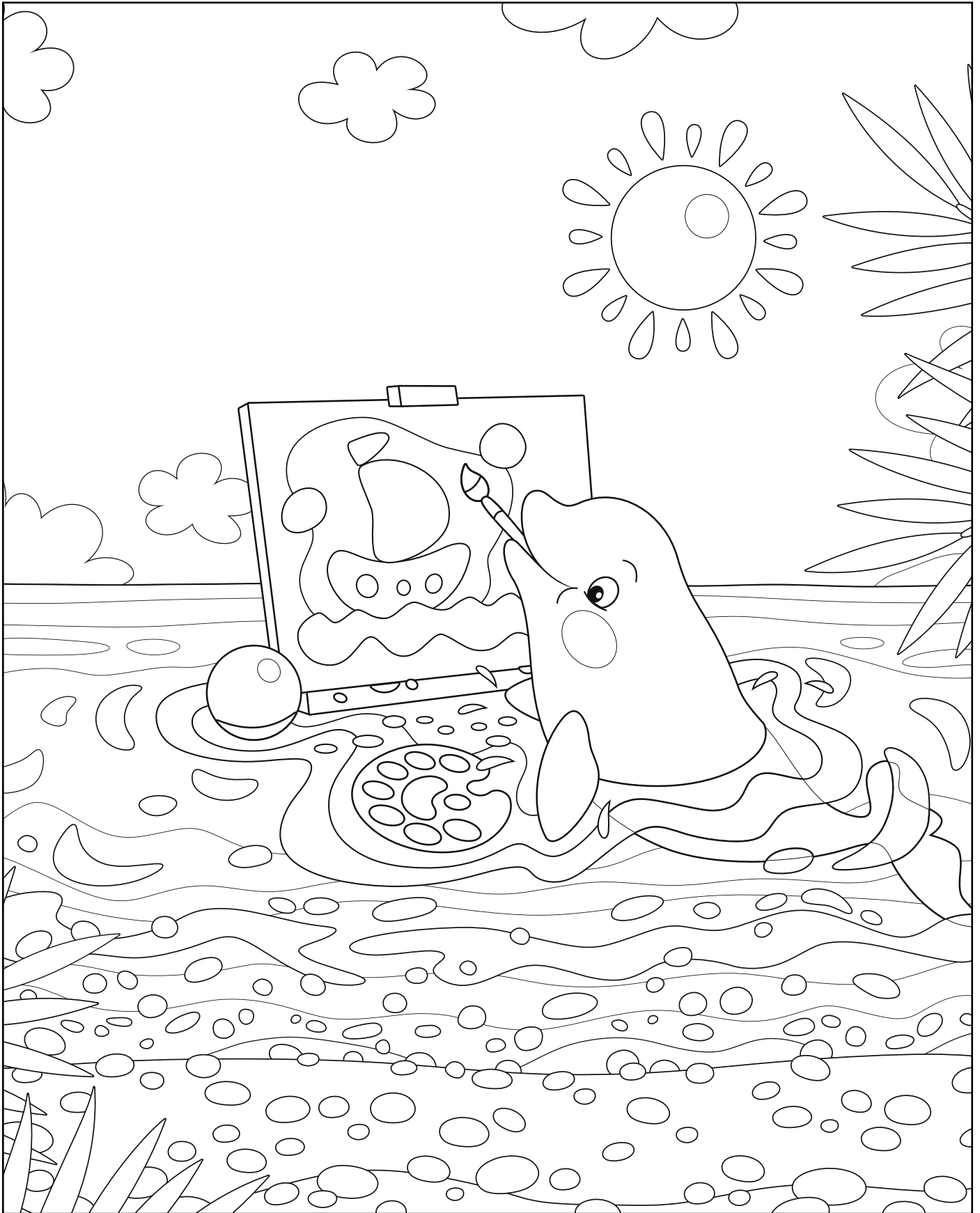
Call **0141 433 2749**

Monday – Friday 9am - 4:30pm

Wednesdays 9am – 2pm

Or email **careandrepair@Southside-ha.co.uk**

Colour Me In!



How to Contact our Staff

By Phone

Repairs

For repairs during office hours please phone **0141 636 3669, 0141 636 3634 or 0141 636 3654**

Repairs Out of Office Hours

Out of Hours Emergency Repairs Emergency Heating Repairs – City Technical Services on **0333 202 0708**

Out of Hours Health and Safety Emergency Internal Repairs – call MEARS on **02035893140**

Other Out of Hours Emergency Repairs – Pointer Call Handling Service, **0141 552 8647**

Welfare Rights

The Association has support available for tenants who need to apply for benefits or Universal Credit. Please phone our welfare rights team on **0141 636 3686** or email **welfarerights@govanhillha.org** if you require assistance.

Rent

To speak to someone about your rent, including if you are having trouble paying your rent.

Sandra Murray: 0141 433 2141

Avril White: 0141 636 3662

Loraine Jennings: 0141 636 3672

Contact the Association by email at **checkin@govanhillha.org**

To contact a member of staff by email, please put their name in the subject heading and use **checkin@govanhillha.org**

Housing Staff

If you are unsure who your housing officer is, please refer to our website.

Mandy Devlin.....	Housing Assistant.....	0141 - 636 - 3681
Tahira Naveed	Housing Assistant.....	0141 - 636 - 3649
Patricia Moran	Housing Assistant.....	0141 - 636 - 3671
Sima Moradi.....	Housing Assistant.....	0141 - 636 - 3653
David Sherwood.....	Housing Officer	0141 - 636 - 3683
Katy Bridgestock.....	Housing Officer	0141 - 433 - 2146
Debbie McNally	Housing Officer	0141 - 636 - 3652
Philip Smith	Housing Officer	0141 - 636 - 3667
Margaret-Ellen Gunn	Senior Housing Officer	0141 - 636 - 3650
Gordon Hill	Senior Housing Officer	0141 - 636 - 3645
Avril Stewart	Housing Services Manager	0141 - 636 - 3655

Factoring Team

Ruby Khosla	Factoring Assistant.....	0141 - 636 - 3666
Heather Batchelor	Factoring Officer	0141 - 636 - 3673
Matthew Cameron	Factoring Officer	0141 - 433 - 2157
Sandy Thomson.....	Factoring Manager	0141 - 636 - 3679