

talkback

AUTUMN 2023

elha.com
east lothian housing association



TIG Talk

Our Tenant Involvement Group (TIG), are a dedicated group of tenant volunteers, who get involved behind the scenes to scrutinise our services, give a tenant's point of view on our day to day business, help us review policies and strategies, and oversee our Tenant Satisfaction and Tenant Participation Action Plans. They're a great group of people, and we'd love for you to meet them.

So they've given us a wee sample of their last meeting:

Overheard after a recent TIG (Tenants Involvement Group) meeting at ELHA Offices in Haddington, between:



Wee Al

(Alan Boyd, Convenor, who declined to provide a photo for a sprite, so we improvised)



Big Sandy

(Sandy Scott, Vice Convenor)



Dab Hand Dave

(David Barrie)



Lads that was a poor turnout for the TIG Meeting today. What can we do to generate interest and encourage more tenants to participate in the TIG?

The more tenants that can be persuaded to participate would provide a wider variety of opinion, and encouragement with ELHA to provide a better service delivery, prioritising the needs of tenants, improving tenant satisfaction, and avoiding complaints.

We could try enticing them with the delicious cakes, pastries and coffee that ELHA provide at each meeting, and also with the intermittent social outings and bus trips on offer to view their Property Portfolio.



Or we could just point out the importance of ELHA tenants working closely with the Association to encourage good engagement to ensure that ALL tenants have the opportunity to help shape the Housing services that they are entitled to.

Aye, when you put it like that, it is hard to understand why there is a general reluctance for tenants to get involved.



Maybe we just haven't been able to target them effectively enough. Which is disappointing, because we all know from experience, what a rewarding and fun time can be experienced for really, what is just a small outlay of time.



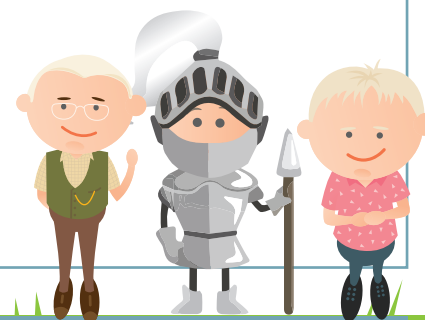
We could try the insertion of a newsletter to be included in the ELHA magazine.

That is what we will do then.



So, if anyone is interested in getting involved in the serious and rewarding business of the Tenants Involvement Group, whilst at the same time enjoying a good blether, coffee and cake, please come along to the next, or any TIG meeting. We would all love to see you there. You will find it illuminating and insightful and can be involved as much or as little as you want.

For details, please contact your Housing officer on **01620 825032**



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New Developments



We have several new developments in the works. The first phase of our Newtonlees development, Pikeman Crescent has just been advertised through These Homes, and we will have several more phases over the course of the year, and into 2024. The development consists of 29 properties and a mix of 2, 3 & 4 bedroom houses plus 2 bedroom cottage flats.

We also have an upcoming development of 23 new build homes in Elphinstone, which will also have a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms houses and flats. All the details will be added to our New Developments page once the details are agreed.



These Homes
www.thesehomes.com/

New Developments Page
www.elha.com/new_developments

Key Tenant Discount Reminder

With more and more tenants using our new Rent Collector app, we wanted to remind tenants with Gold and Platinum rent discounts they their rent must be paid in full by the 28th of each month to qualify for their full discount. Even if your rent account is clear by the end of the month, if you'd not paid your rent by the 28th, your discount will drop down to a lower level.



Consultation Calendar

We will be consulting with tenants for the following over the next year:

| Consultation | Consulting with | When |
|----------------------------|--|---------------|
| Stair Cleaning Survey | Tenants who pay a service charge of communal area cleaning | December 2023 |
| Communication Strategy | All tenants | October 2023 |
| Garden Care Review | Tenant who receive the Garden Care service | October 2023 |
| Rent Increase Consultation | All tenants | January 2024 |

Performance 365

Our microsite, Performance 365, has now been updated with our 2022/23 performance figures. Our performance remains high, and most services have bounced back from the lingering effects of the pandemic restrictions, which were in place at the start of the 2022-23 financial year.

A summary, with top line statistics, plus our financial accounts will be available later in the summer.

<https://performance365.elha.com/>



Benefit Update

A quick update on the latest news from the DWP.

Cost of Living Payments

Most people entitled to the £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment will have been paid automatically between 20 June and 4 July.

If you think you should have had one of the following payments but cannot see it in your bank, building society or credit union account:

- £301 Cost of Living Payment for a low-income benefit
- £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment

Move to Universal Credit

The managed migration of Tax Credits to Universal Credit has started in England and is expected to cover East Lothian by September 2023, and be in all areas by the end of 2024. If you receive Tax Credits, you will receive a notification by letter letting you know when you will be migrated over to Universal Credit and will give you further details on anything you need to do.



Please note that if you are pension age, and on benefits, you will not be part of this migration.

Increased Childcare Support

Low-income families will be able to access increased childcare support from 28 June 2023.

The amount that parents in receipt of Universal Credit can claim back monthly for their childcare costs will increase to £951 for one child and £1,630 for two or more children. This is a rise of 47% from the previous limits of £646 for one child or £1,108 for two or more children.

More help will also be given to parents starting work or who are reducing their working hours to ensure they can cover the costs of childcare. Those parents will also receive up to 85% of their childcare costs back before their next month's bills are due – meaning they should have money to pay childcare costs one month in advance going forward.



Social Security Scotland:

www.mygov.scot/contact-social-security-scotland



Farewell Paula & Anne, and Welcome Gary & Angi!

It's all change at ELHA as our Director of Finance, Paula Oliver, retired at the end of June after 29 years.

Paula was only our seventh staff member and has seen the Association grow from just 200 homes into the Group it is today, not just a housing association but with R3 as a thriving subsidiary maintenance company and a Care & Repair service too.

But as one chapter ends, another starts, with the appointment of Gary Alison as ELHA's new Director of Finance & Corporate Services.

Gary joins ELHA having worked in the social housing sector for the last seven years with Loreburn Housing Association, with roles including Head of Finance and Procurement, Director of Finance and Corporate Services and latterly as Director of Property & Development.

Our Money & Home Energy Adviser, Anne Rattray, left at the end of July.



Anne joined us eleven years ago to provide our tenants with an independent Money Advice Service via Castle Rock Edinvar (now Places for People Scotland). Her background

included working with the Department for Works and Pensions making her ideally suited to help our tenants apply for benefits. During 2020, Anne increased her qualifications and extended the Service to provide Home Energy Advice. Over her time with us, Anne has accessed over a million pounds for our tenants in benefit claims, grant funding, charitable donations and more, and has supported hundreds of tenants to make the most of their income, and run their home in an energy efficient way.

We're sad to see Anne go, but thank her for her exemplary work over the years, and wish her all the best for the future.

We also have a new face joining Nicola and Alison on Reception, with Angi Grieve joining our Corporate Services team as a Senior Assistant.

Angi previously worked in the pension industry and within the school system, so moving over to social housing is quite a change!

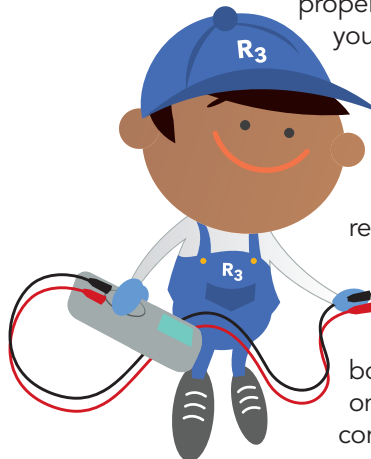


Planned Maintenance Update

The Planned Maintenance Programme for 2023/24 is moving along nicely. The kitchen replacements in Gifford and the bathroom replacements at Plough Lane, Tranent, where we have been able to get access, are complete, and a number of the kitchens from earlier projects where we were unable to get access initially, have also been completed.

The kitchen replacement project in Goose Green Court, Musselburgh is now on site with completion expected by late September. The next kitchen replacement project will be in North High Street, Musselburgh, and letters to tenants advising of forthcoming visits to measure up for their new kitchens should be with them soon.

The bathroom replacement in Tyne Park, Pencaitland started on site in late July and is expected to finish in mid-September. This project has been delayed by the large number of "one off" replacements and over bath showers which we have been fitting. It may come as a surprise to many that we still have some homes without access to a shower. Whenever we come across this situation in an empty property, we will fit an over bath shower and we are committed to providing showers in all of our properties. If you don't have a shower in your home and you would like one, please contact us and we will have a Property Officer come out to visit you to see what we can do to help. Following on from Tyne Park will be the replacement of the bathrooms at the older properties in The Glebe, East Saltoun.



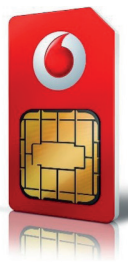
The project to rebuild a boundary wall in Stenton is now on site and it is hoped to have this complete by mid-September.

Future projects can be found on the Planned Maintenance Calendar on elha.com:

https://www.elha.com/planned_maintenance_calendar

Want to get Connected?

We have a small stock of prepaid Vodaphone SIM cards, available to tenants who may be struggling with bills. If you'd like to request one, just get in touch with your Housing Officer by clicking on the chat button on our website, e-mailing info@elha.com, calling us on **01620 825032**, or popping into our office on Market Street in Haddington.





NHS Volunteers

Do you have two to three free hours a week, and would like to spend them helping people? East Lothian Community Hospital in Haddington are looking for volunteers.

Volunteers spend a couple of hours a week directing visitors to the hospital, talking to patients, offering refreshments and taking part in activities. Full training and support will be given by the Voluntary Services Team.

To find out more, call Laura on **07813 010 332** or email Laura.Wark@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk



Scrutinising Satisfaction with New Build Homes

Our TIG-Scrutiny tenants have chosen to look into satisfaction with new builds this year. They will be looking at satisfaction with several past developments, the processes put place to help tenants notify the builder of any defects, and possibly also visit a new build development, if time allows. They will have the opportunity to look at the process from the tenant's point of view and make recommendations if they identify anything which we could handle better.

It promises to be an interesting project, and if any tenants would like to dip their toes into tenant engagement, but don't want to commit to joining the TIG-Panel, this could be a fun introduction. And if you have been allocated a new build home with us in the last five years, we would love for you to come along and meet with members of TIG-Scrutiny.

If you'd like to learn more about scrutinising our services, get in touch with your Housing Officer by e-mailing enquiries@elha.com or calling on **01620 825032**

Saving for a Rainy Day?

Some would argue that now is the rainy day people should have been saving for, but if you are thinking about setting up a savings account, becoming a member of Capital Credit Union is a good choice. CCU is a non-profit, member-owned organisation, so your money is being used to the benefit of the local community.

You can save as little as £1 a week, and members have access to ethical low-interest loans, free loan protection insurance, and free savings insurance.



To find out more, visit Capital Credit Union's website: www.capitalcreditunion.com

One Parent Families Scotland

One Parent Families Scotland is the leading charity working with single parents in Scotland. They offer support and advice on various topics and have recently developed a new mental health and wellbeing service.

Their mission is to work with, and for, single parent families, to provide support services that enable them to achieve their potential and help create lasting solutions to the poverty and barriers facing many single parents and their children.



For more information, visit their website, or if you need help or advice, you can call their helpline on **0808 801 0323** www.opfs.org.uk

