

Rent and Service Charge Consultation 2020/21

You will have already received this information through the post and it is also on your notice board and on our website.

In summary the proposal is:

- **2% increase in your rent** - This would mean that your rent would increase by between £6.37 and £10.89 per month depending on the size and type of property that you live in.
- **2% increase to most service charges.**
- **Common area expenses will increase by more than 2%** - an increase of £1.44 per month is proposed.
- **There will be a reduction in heating and hot water costs.** We are proposing to reduce the current service charge for central heating and to introduce a new service charge for central heating and hot water for tenants who receive both these services.

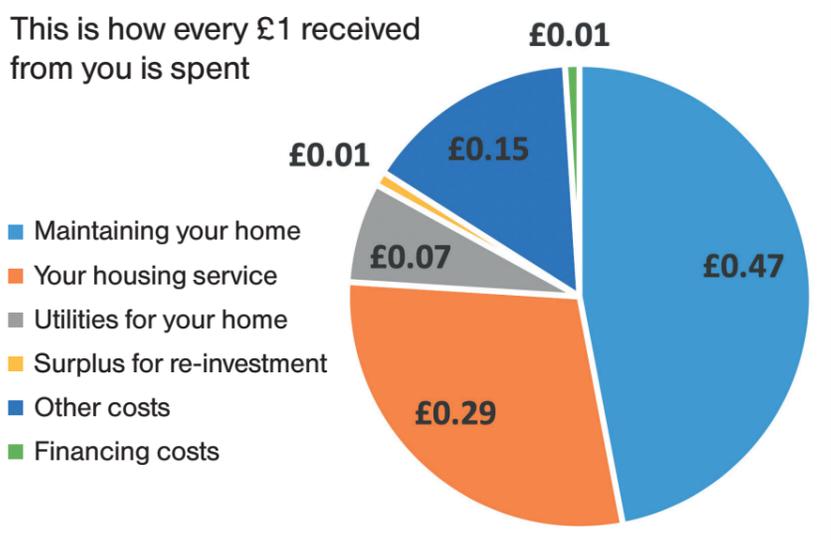
Our current service charge for central heating for a 2 bedroom property is £43.18 per month. The new proposed charges for 2020/21 for a 2 bedroom property are as follows:

- Central Heating only - £29.62 per month
- Central Heating and Hot Water - £34.62 per month

Maintaining your home - This includes the cost of organising and providing day to day repairs and planned maintenance programmes.

Your housing service - This includes staff costs related to providing our housing

This is how every £1 received from you is spent



management and housing support services, gardening, cleaning and common area spend.

Utilities for your home - This includes the cost of gas and/or electricity.

Surplus for re-investment - This is the amount we have left over from our income once our expenditure is taken into account.

Other costs - This includes the cost of services and infrastructure which provide business support such as IT systems.

Financing costs - This includes interest payable.

The proposed increase will allow us to deliver current services and to deliver enhancements such as:

- Increased expenditure on our empty properties
- Upgrades to fire alarms, lighting and water systems
- Increase expenditure on laundry equipment and gardening
- Re-introduction of handyperson service
- Increased expenditure on paths and boundary walls
- Planned investment in stock of £2.1 million

If you would like further information please ask a member of staff for the supplementary information sheet.

Remember to fill in the questionnaire that was sent to you (or ask a member of staff for a copy of this) and return either in the feedback boxes in our staffed complexes, in the free post envelope that was sent to you or complete the survey online at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/K7PYLL7> or scan here to complete the survey.



All comments to be received by 31 December 2019.

Comments will be submitted as part of the submission to the Board in February 2020 where the decision will be made. Tenants will be notified of the outcome at the end of February 2020.



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our tenants and residents from all the staff at Viewpoint

Emergency Contacts and Office Opening Hours over Christmas and New Year

Monday 23 December 2019
9am - 5pm

Tuesday 24 December 2019
9am - 3pm

Wednesday 25 December 2019
Office Closed

Thursday 26 December 2019
Office Closed

Friday 27 December 2019
9am - 4.30pm

Monday 30 December 2019
9am - 5pm

Tuesday 31 December 2019
9am - 3pm

Wednesday 1 January 2020
Office Closed

Thursday 2 January 2020
Office Closed

Friday 3 January 2020
9am - 4.30pm

If you have an emergency when the office is closed either

Telephone **0800 783 3615**

Or Pull your emergency cord for your alarm call system

Freedom of Information Scotland Act (2002) - The right to know

What is FOI?

The Freedom of Information Scotland Act 2002 gives people the general right to see recorded information (*information held on paper or in electronic format*) held by Viewpoint. It is intended to promote a culture of openness and accountability amongst public sector bodies, and therefore facilitate better public understanding of how public authorities carry out their duties, why they make the decisions they do, and how they spend public money.

What are our legal duties under this Act?

❖ Duty to publish information

This means that we make information available to you without specific request being made. You can check our Guide to Information on our website or ask a member of staff to get a paper copy.

❖ Duty to respond to requests

When you request information from us, we will try to give it to you as quickly as possible and within 20 working days. The first working day of your request is the date after the date on which we receive it.

We might ask you for more details to help us identify exactly what you are asking for, the 20 working days will only start once you have given those details.

To make this process easy for both of us, make sure that your request clearly states what it is you would like to know.

❖ Duty to advise and assist

We are here to help you! If you would like to make a request, but you are not sure how to do it, please contact us.

We will also advise and assist you throughout the request process.

What sort of information is included in the Publication Scheme?

- » General information about Viewpoint
- » How we deliver our functions and services
- » How we take decisions and what we have decided
- » What we spend and how we spend
- » How we manage our resources
- » How we procure goods and services from external providers

Please check our website for more details!

@HOME Questionnaire

You may remember recently a questionnaire was sent to all tenants living in Sheltered & Enhanced Sheltered complexes. Thank you to all those who took the time to complete this.

This was an exercise to try and ascertain who many tenants were currently already receiving care packages either through Local Authority funding or private funding. We also asked those who currently do not receive a care package, whether this is something they would consider either now or in the future.

The information gained from the returned questionnaires and the information given to us by Edinburgh Council assisted Viewpoint in pinpointing potential sites where we could extend the @HOME Service, and the option for tenants to pay privately for this service.

At present the @HOME Service is going well at Croft-An-Righ, and we continue to recruit care staff to ensure we are able to meet the high demands of the service.

It is Viewpoint's intention to try and roll this service out over the next few years, and as and when we have further information on potential dates, we will advise tenants who will be in the roll out sites.

Performance Report for Tenants 2018/2019

We produced our performance report on 30 September 2019 and it has been uploaded onto our website www.viewpoint.org.uk. A copy of the full report is available on the website or if you would like a paper copy then please contact us.

Viewpoint Tenants were involved in preparing the report to try and make the information clear and meaningful to you. It would be good to know what you think about it.

Focus on Repairs

For this newsletter we have highlighted the repairs performance in 2018/2019 and what we plan to do in the coming year.

	Performance in 2018/19	2018/19 Target	Benchmark average
Average time to complete emergency repairs	2.45 hours	3.5 hours	4.2 hours
Average time to complete non-emergency repairs	4.73 days	5 days	5.9 days
Reactive repairs carried out and completed right first time	91.3%	90%	93%
Reactive repair appointments which were kept	86.8%	97%	98%
Tenants who had repairs/maintenance carried out in the last 12 months and were satisfied with the service	93%	90%	88%
Viewpoint properties meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	97%	100%	97%

As you can see there are a number of areas where we have exceeded our target but there is still work to be done especially in relation to making sure that repair appointments are kept.

Action taken during 2018/19

- We stopped using Mears as our reactive repairs contractor, by mutual consent, and engaged TB Mackay on a temporary basis to ensure continuity of service.
- We undertook a procurement exercise to increase the number of contractors we can use to deliver improvement works.

During 2019/20

- We will ensure outstanding works are carried out by 31 March 2020 so that our properties meet the SHQS.
- We will procure a reactive repairs contractor and involve tenants in the process.
- We will put in place a programme for planned maintenance in 2020/21 and share this with tenants in March 2020.



Paying Your Rent by Direct Debit

Did you know that you can pay your rent by direct debit.

There are advantages that you do not need to contact your bank each year to change the amount that you pay as you have to do with standing orders.

Paying by Direct Debit comes with a guarantee: We will always give you 10 working days' notice of any change to your direct debit, and we will refund you immediately if any error is made in the collection of your direct debit. You remain in control and can cancel your direct debit at any time.

It's easy to set up a direct debit for your rent: just ask our housing team for a direct debit instruction form. You need to fill out your sort code, account number and account name and our staff will help you fill out the other details.

Once we have received the form we will process your details and write back to you to tell you when your first payment will be deducted – you will have at least 10 working days' notice from this letter before any payment will be taken. If you have a standing order currently in place you will have to cancel this once you receive the letter telling you when your first payment will be taken by direct debit or you could end up having two payments taken.

News in Brief from Viewpoint



Repairs Contractor

As you know our repairs contractor, T B McKay, are on a temporary contract. We are currently going through the procurement (fancy word for purchasing) process for a repairs contract for the next 5 years.

Several tenants attended training on what procurement is and what has to be done to meet our legal requirements. Tenants said they did not realise it was so involved and it gave a "better understanding of why things are done the way they are done".

As a follow up to this there was a half-day meeting with the tenant volunteers to discuss what you want from the new contractor. There was a very good discussion about quality issues, timescales and feedback on how a repairs service is delivered. This will be taken into account when the tenders are issued and assessed.

The repairs contract should take affect from the 1 April 2020 and we will let you know who the contractor is and any changes that you can expect.



Handyman Service

The return of the Handyman service for tenants is being looked at. At this time, we are not sure what this will look like so watch this space.



Joy of Later Years

Many of you have indicated that you do not like our strap line "Joy of Later Years" and as a result of the negative feedback we are going to look at reviewing this at some point next year. There will be an opportunity for tenants to have an input into this.

Mini Bus

We have acquired a mini bus and we hope to use this to help tenants get involved in activities across our complexes. At the moment we do not have any drivers and have to establish policies and procedures for using the bus. We will keep you informed but you may want to start thinking about how you would like the bus to be used.

Reporting a Repair



There are a few options available to you to request a repair to your property.



During Office Hours

You can telephone us on **08003 457 347** during office hours to speak to a member of the Repairs Team.



You can report a repair through our website www.viewpoint.org.uk or by emailing us at repair@viewpoint.org.uk. This can be done at any time of the day but if it is an emergency you should telephone as above or speak to a member of staff onsite.



If you live in a staffed complex you can report your own repairs directly to Viewpoint. Alternatively you can pop into the Coordinators office during their working hours and ask them to report this repair on your behalf. If you choose to report your repair to the Coordinator please make sure you are given a date and time for the repair to be carried out. Common area repairs should be reported to the Coordinator unless it is an emergency.



Out of Hours Emergency Repairs

If you have an emergency repair outwith office hours then please call the out of hours number which is **03456 044 686**.



If you live in a property where you have access to alarm pull cords you can also contact the out of hours team by pulling your alarm cord and reporting this repair to Hanover Telecare, who can arrange an emergency repair if it is deemed an emergency or log this with the Repairs Team the following working day.

Keep Warm This Winter

Dress in layers as this keeps you warmer.

Wear a hat, gloves and a scarf when you are outside - apparently when your head gets cold your body temperature drops faster because the heat in your body rushes to heat the large number of blood vessels in your head. (source BBC)



Close your curtains at dusk to help keep the heat in and block out draughts.

Use a hot water bottle or electric blanket to keep warm in bed - don't use both!

Throw a blanket over yourself if you are sitting watching TV or reading a book - makes you feel cosy.

Enjoy a hot drink—tea, coffee or a nice hot chocolate.

Don't use alcohol to keep you warm - the warm sensation you get when you drink alcohol is because the blood vessels in the skin expand but this takes the heat away from your vital organs. (source British Heart Foundation)



Move Around

If you can try and move around at least once an hour - even just walking to the kitchen to get a hot drink.

Avoid sitting still for too long - wiggle your toes or rotate your ankles if you can - it all helps.

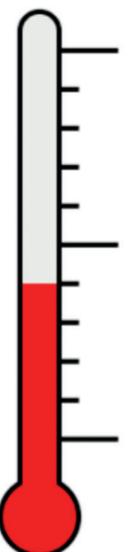
Go for a wee walk - round the block, to the shops or down to the common room.



Turn the heating up if you are cold.

The room you spend most time in should be around 21 degrees C. Your other rooms should be around 18 degrees C.

If you are worried about your costs please see overleaf for advice on help with fuel costs this winter.



Help With Fuel Bill this Winter



Winter Fuel Payment

You may be entitled If you were born before 5 April 1954 and lived in the United Kingdom for one day in the qualifying week (16-22 September 2019). Most payments will be automatic over November and December. If you have not received your payment by 13 January 2020 and you think you are entitled contact the office which normally pays your benefits (see your award letter for a contact number). You can also contact the Winter Fuel Payment Officer on **0800 731 0160**

Cold Weather Payment

Cold weather payments can be paid during

the period 1/11/2019 - 31/3/2020. £25 will be paid for each 7 day period of "very cold weather" and it will be paid into your account within 14 days. You MAY get this payment if you satisfy certain conditions and get one of the following benefits: Pension Credit, Income Support, Income related Jobseekers Allowance, Child Tax Credit or Income related Employment and Support Allowance. If you think you should have received a payment please contact your Pension centre of the Jobcentre Plus office which deals with your claim.

Warm Homes Discount Scheme

You could get £140 off your electricity bill (or gas bill if your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity) for winter 2019 under the Warm Home discount Scheme. Check to see if your supplier is part of the scheme

at www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/energy-suppliers. Your name has to be on your fuel bill at 7 July 2019. If you are getting the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit you should receive a letter automatically by December 2019 telling you how to get the discount.

If you do not receive the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit the you may still qualify if you are on a low income. Check with you supplier to see if you are eligible and how to apply.

And if you need any help with this or any other benefit issue then please contact our

Welfare benefits Advisor
Elaine Rosie on **0131 662 5144** or email at elaine.rosie@viewpoint.org.uk



Give yourself peace of mind – Make sure you have Home Contents Insurance?

As a tenant Viewpoint have building insurance for the building that you live in. However your contents, including decoration, are not covered by Viewpoint's insurance.

Home contents insurance is designed to protect your belongings and no matter how careful you are there is always a risk that your belongings could be damaged or stolen. Whilst home contents insurance cannot replace items that have a sentimental value it can replace items that you need, or would wish to replace such as furniture, soft furnishings, electrical goods, jewellery etc. Home contents insurance can also cover some items when you take them out of the house.

Where do you start to make sure that you get good home contents insurance at a reasonable cost?

The best place to start is online where you can compare what is being offered and get quotes for home contents insurance – try www.confused.com to compare up to 76 quotations in minutes.

For those over 50 years old there are a number of insurance companies who offer a better deal on your home contents insurance because over the age of 50 you are considered 'less risk' as you are less likely to cause damage. Some examples are ageco, esure or Saga but there are many more.

What Are Tenants Currently Involved in?

- Tenants have taken part in procurement training and attended a repairs workshop to help develop the tender for the new repairs contractor.
- Prepared the information for the leaflet for rent consultation which has been sent out to you and is also included in this issue of Newpoint.
- Quarterly meetings at local complexes giving tenants the opportunity to discuss with staff any local issues.
- Attended meeting of TAG and now looking to elect a committee.
- First Committee meeting for Fife Viewpoint Tenants Group to start to take things forward for the tenants in Fife.
- Recruitment of staff including the Head of Asset Management, Housing Team Leader and Tenant Participation and Communication Co-ordinator.

.....And What is Coming Up?

- Scrutiny group to look at the standard that we have for our empty houses. The group will make recommendations that will be presented to the Board of Management.
- Working group to prepare for the Tenant Conference in June 2020 – to look at themes, date, venue etc.
- Group to help decide what information goes in the new tenants' handbook and what format that will take.
- Editorial group to help prepare the newsletter for you to make sure you are getting the information that you want and need.

Tenant Participation and Communication Co-ordinator – What is THAT?

It is me!.... and my name is Heather Jeffrie and I started with Viewpoint on the 30 September 2019.

I have worked in housing for 27 years and my experience is mostly in delivering housing management and repair services to a variety of different tenants: young people, older people, sheltered housing services, families, those getting their first tenancy (young and not so young!), tenants with physical or mental health issues, homeless and with gypsy travellers. I have been involved working with community groups to help tenants get their voice heard and make changes to improve their homes and neighbourhoods. I have also helped tenants groups make funding applications.

My job is to help you to get involved in shaping Viewpoint services and making sure you receive the information that you want and need. It is about helping you communicate and influence the decisions that are



made about your home and to help Viewpoint staff communicate with you. Lots of good stuff happens now but we can make it better.

I have to confess that all my life I have been a West Coaster and my last job was in Dunoon, so moving to Auld Reekie is like moving to another world for me – all these people and cars and buses! I am looking forward to living in the City and being able to use the theatre and restaurants without having to think about getting the ferry home.

I love my job and am interested to know what you think and what you would like to see happen at Viewpoint.

Over the last few weeks I have visited some areas and been to a few coffee mornings and it has been nice to start to get to know you. Things will not happen overnight, but I believe that if we all work together we can make things better for you in your home and in your community.

If you have any ideas or would just like a chat about what Viewpoint are doing then please give me a call on **0131 662 5142** or email me at TP@viewpoint.org.uk.

Lothian Tenants Action Group

Viewpoint Tenants from Lothian met on the 23 October 2019 to decide what they would like to do next.

All Lothian tenants received a questionnaire along with the draft constitution and code of conduct and we received nearly 10% responses – 86% of these were very positive about TAG.

27 tenants attended this meeting and we now have a group of 9 volunteers who will help set up the election process for a committee. It was agreed by tenants at the meeting that the next open meeting of TAG will:

- Elect a Committee of between 3 and 8 people.
- Have an open discussion on Communication within Viewpoint and how it can be improved

The 9 volunteers met and decided that they also want to consider a social event as part of the election process. They also came up with lots of ideas about looking not only at housing issues but also about tackling social isolation.

One of the volunteers wanted to start a Knit'n'Natter group at West Richmond Street and as a result the group are now meeting on a Tuesday afternoon between 2pm and 4pm.

If you wish to attend can you contact Heather Jeffrie on **0131 662 5142** or email tp@viewpoint.org.uk as we will have to arrange access to the building for you.

If you wish to be a committee member on Lothian TAG please let Heather know.

Where are all your photographs and news for Newpoint?



You have told us that you liked Newspoint but would like more local stories included. We need to know what is going on and then we can get it included and if you have photographs then that is even better. Don't worry about writing something we will help you.

If you have a local story you think should be included in Newspoint then please speak to your coordinator and ask them to put your story forward.

No coordinator – no problem just let your Tenant Participation and Communication Coordinator know. Contact Heather on **0131 662 5142** or email tp@viewpoint.org.uk

We want tenants to be involved in the editing of the newsletter along with a couple of staff members. It will probably mean a couple of meetings for each newsletter. You don't have to help with every newsletter but just as and when you want. If you want to be part of the editorial group then please let Heather know (*contact details above*).

Fife Viewpoint Tenants Group – First Open Forum

The Fife Viewpoint Tenants Committee met at the end of October to start planning for the future. A short survey was issued to all Fife tenants by the Committee to ask what was going well, what was not going so well and what the tenants would like to see for their group.

The first Fife tenants open Forum will be on Friday 13 December 2019 at 11am in Buchan Gardens in Buckhaven.

Feedback will be given on the survey that was issued by the committee. This will help Fife tenants decide what to do first. Esther Wilson, Director of People and Places, will be at the meeting along with other Viewpoint staff to discuss the rent and service charge proposals for 2020/21 along with any other questions you have on Viewpoint services.

The Committee are very keen to have a competition day between the Fife residents next year and more details will be sent to you in the New Year on this. So get practicing your skills whether that is Pool or carpet bowls or brushing up on your quiz skills so that you are ready to take part.

Want to Get Involved?

Our Volunteer Bank may be just the thing for you.

We have a list of volunteers who have told us they would like to be involved in one or more of the following:

- Recruitment: Involved in the recruitment of staff across the organisation.
- Conference Planning: assist in the planning of the tenants conference so that it is something you want to go to.
- Performance: Get involved in looking at performance issues to see if Viewpoint are implementing their policies. Reports are sent to senior staff and the Board with any recommendations made.
- Communication: Anything that involves communication such as the newsletter, how we develop our website, leaflets and information for tenants.

You can decide what you would like to do and will be contacted when there is something we are working on. If the timing is not right for you or it is a subject you are not particularly interested in then you just say not this time. There is no pressure to say yes.

Please note that we can help with transport or care if required – please just ask.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or you would like more information regarding this then please contact Heather Jeffrie, our Tenant Participation and Communications Coordinator, on **0131 662 5142** or email tp@viewpoint.org.uk. Alternatively contact your Co-ordinator who will be happy to help.



We're searching for Volunteers

Care Home Nurses complete Leadership Programme

Pictured holding their certificates of completion are some of our Nurses from our care homes who recently attended a 2 day Leadership programme at the Royal College of Nursing Head Office in Edinburgh.



From left to right we have Flordeliza from Marian care home and Heidi, Sabrina, Zofia, Janice and far right Faith from St Raphael's Care home. The trainers Ruth and Andrea are also pictured.

The course ran over 2 separate days in October and covered a variety of subjects such as Leadership Styles, Accountability, Social Media, Managing Change, Resilience and Reflection to name but a few.

Congratulations on your achievement!

Haugh Park's Big Loss!

Ann Lawrie, Coordinator at Haugh Park, lost 8 stone in weight so that she would not have to hide in family photographs at her children's weddings.



In 2015, Ann's daughter said she was getting married in 2016 and on 11 November 2015 Ann joined Slimming World to lose some weight. By the time her daughter got married Ann had lost 4 stone and said she felt good.

She could just have given up then but her son then announced he was going to get married in 2017 so she continued her journey. By March 2018 she had lost 8 stone and 1/2 pound and reached her target weight – and she intends to stay there.

So how has this changed Ann's life?

- Ann said that the biggest change is in her health – her blood pressure is now normal and she has come off most of her diabetic and heart medication and has reduced the number of pills she takes each day from 14 to 4. She told me she no longer rattles when she moves.
- Ann changed her eating habits – she was a big bread and cheese person – and she now eat more fruit and has given up pastry, cooks healthier meals and stopped using ready-made sauces to cook with.
- She feels so much fitter in her job. There is no lift at Haugh Park and the stairs used to 'look like Everest' and it took forever to get round everywhere. Now she can deliver a letter to every tenant and attacks the stairs like a teenager, completing the task in 15 minutes.
- Ann said she 'feels different, has more energy and achieves more'.

What advice does Ann have for people who want to lose weight?

- 'Losing weight can alleviate health issues and reduce the medication that you have to take. A small weight loss can make a difference.'

However, Ann says there is one major drawback – she has less padding on her rear end and finds sitting at meetings on our chairs a bit less comfortable!

Fancy Dress at Buchan Gardens

Buchan Gardens held a Disney night on 21 September 2019 and as you can see from the photograph, quite a few characters turned up:



Cruella Deville from 101 Dalmatians (Wilma Rankin), Little Red Riding Hood (Betty McKay), Little Red Riding Hood's Grannie (Peggy MacFarlane), Scarecrow (Tom Noble), Sulley from Monsters Inc. (Jennifer Wilkinson) and Woody from Toy Story (Danny Rankin).

We decorated the hall in a Disney theme and

had a buffet and music, supplied from a live band "Walter and Bonita". We all had a great night!

We then had a Halloween night on 26 October and 21 residents and friends attended. Wilma and Jennifer supplied a large spread buffet which was well received by guests. We were entertained by Lorraine and Harry to some very good music and we joined in with the singing. We had a great night and we are looking forward to our next function.



Carpet Bowls at Gillespie Crescent

Residents at Gillespie Crescent development have found a new outlet for their 'youthful' spirits.

Alex Gunn was a member of Merchiston Bowling Club and was involved with the start-up of carpet bowls at Gillespie Crescent. This grew from a few trying it out to the current regular attendance of 16 men and women.

Three of them, Hamish, John and Jimmy, became so interested that they went along to Merchiston Bowling Club at Alex's invitation.

They have become involved in the weekly 'Jumbles' and also regularly practice on their own on a Sunday. Their first match for the club was in a recent friendly against Galashiels and all three are looking forward to playing regularly for the club next season in the Edinburgh Bowling League.

Hamish said that he did not realise how much he had missed the camaraderie that you get as part of a sports club. He also mentioned how good it was to meet and play

with different people every week as the rinks are drawn at random.

Angus Gunn, President of Merchiston Bowling Club, has been delighted at how the new members have fitted in and he is keen to see them play an even bigger part in the club next season. We are always looking for new members and a warm welcome awaits anyone who wants to come along.

If you are interested in taking up bowling contact Angus on **07803 816 111** for details of Merchiston Bowling Club and other clubs that may be closer to you.



Photograph is of Alex, Hamish, John, Jimmy and Angus.

Balfour House – Busy Months Ahead for Tenants

November

29/11/2019 - St Andrews Night with Duncan McBain providing entertainment and food provided by Fern's Kitchen

December

20/12/2019 - Christmas dinner with food from Fern's Kitchen and entertainment and music

22/12/2019 - Carol service with mulled wine and mince pies—open to tenants family and friends

January

Kings theatre to see Goldilocks and the Three Bears—organised by the residents committee

And Haugh Park are just as busy

Every Second Tuesday Evening: Games Night

Every Second Tuesday Afternoon: Coffee Afternoon

First Friday of the month – Drinks Night

In November, tenants are having a Christmas Fayre to raise money for their Christmas lunch in December. They are going for a Christmas Shopping trip in December to Livingston

If you would like to join in any of these activities then please speak to Ann, your coordinator, who will give you exact dates and times for these events

Living Doll and the Song of the Nightingale

I visited one of the open days by Tap in to It at St Albans court to find out what went on.

I sat beside two lovely ladies, one who had been attending the class for a few weeks, and her friend who was visiting for the first time. They were playing the weekly computer bingo. This is a card with tasks to do on the computer and you see how many you can complete. If you don't know how to do something there are volunteers there to help you.

Tony, one of the volunteers was there to keep us right and he showed us that you do not need to be able to type to get information out a computer – so we gave voice recognition a try.

Tony asked the computer what time it was in Honolulu and on the screen it appeared like magic.

“Can you play Cliff Richard, Living Doll?” we asked the computer and before we knew what was happening up Cliff started singing Living Doll and we sang along too.

So we decided to try something else and so we asked the computer to “play the song of the nightingale” and the air was filled with



the bird's sweet song and a slide show of pictures of the bird appearing on the screen.

So how was the computer club – it was fabulous. Not only were people learning with each other how to use a computer but also chatting and laughing, drinking tea and eating biscuits. A great morning out – you should give it a try.



Tap in to It classes are held in the following Viewpoint complexes and are free of charge if you are a tenant of Viewpoint. And if you don't have a computer – no worries because you can always use one of the class tablets to see how you get on.

St Alban's Court – Thursdays between 10:30am and 12:15pm
 Old Farm Court – Thursdays between 2.30pm and 4pm
 47 Gillespie Crescent – Fridays between 10am and 11:45am
 For more information please contact Mike Ellis on **0131 228 5716**.
 Give it a go – you might just surprise yourself.

What have the Residents in Marian House been up to?

Our garden committee's enthusiasm continues throughout the seasons. Currently they are perusing the local gardens centres for some winter planting and preparing for Christmas colours.

Garden committee 'Rooting for a bargain or two.'



LAND AHOY



The bus trip in the new bus to Ratho barge was hugely successful and enjoyed by residents and staff alike. The weather proved glorious which always enhances any outing.

We ventured further afield as the residents had requested they would like to go and view the Kelpies. This bus trip did not disappoint however the weather was freezing so everyone wrapped up well and enjoyed their afternoon cup of tea and a scone.

Horse power



Jill our activities coordinator sourced an outside wheelchair track which we decided to explore with Helen (101 years young) and Marjorie (95 years young). This outdoor adventure was hugely successful and Marjorie demonstrated her driving skills on the little red scooter provided by the centre, Beep Beep!! It is our intention to have another trip to this centre with other residents.

City Park Annual Craft Fair

Tenants at City Park in St Andrews have been very busy preparing for their Christmas Craft fair at City Park on Saturday 7 December 2019. The photograph shows some of the beautiful items that the tenants have already made and there were lots more already made and some still to come. Well done to everyone and what talented people you all are.

Money raised from the fair each year is divided between The Motor Neurone Disease Association (MND) and Tayside Children with Cancer and Leukaemia (TCCL).



Advanced Driving TEST



Winter Warming Recipe Provided by Ann Lawrie from a Slimming World Recipe

Beef Stew and Parsley Dumplings – Serves 2

Ingredients

Low fat cooking spray
 375g lean stewing beef diced
 1 small onion roughly chopped
 2 garlic cloves, crushed
 300ml boiling beef stock
 1 heaped teaspoon tomato purée
 1.5 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
 1 bay leaf
 150g carrots scrubbed and roughly chopped
 Half a small swede, peeled and cut into bite size chunks
 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
 25g plain flour
 13g vegetable suet
 1 tablespoon chopped parsley plus extra to serve



- Preheat oven to 160OC/ Fan 140OC/Gas 3
- Spray a non-stick frying pan with low calorie spray and place over a high heat. Brown the beef in batches to seal in the flavour and transfer to a casserole dish.
- Add the onion and garlic to the frying pan and pour in the stock, tomato purée, Worcestershire sauce and bay leaf. Bring to the boil and then reduce the heat to low and simmer for about 5 minutes, scraping up any tasty crispy bits. Season and pour the mixture into the casserole dish.
- Add carrots, swede and thyme and mix through. Cover the dish.
- Put in oven for 2 ½ hours.
- Make the dumplings by mixing the flour, suet, parsley and some seasoning. Stir in 1 – 2 tablespoons cold water and mix well to form a soft dough. Divide the dough into 4 pieces and shape into equal sized patties.
- Remove casserole from the oven and add the dumplings on top of the stew and cook uncovered for another 20-25 minutes.
- Scatter some parsley over the top and serve with your favourite vegetables.

Edinburgh – Past, Present and Future



Edinburgh in Christmas Past!

Edinburgh is, in fact, the birthplace of Scrooge. Whilst on a visit to Edinburgh University, Charles Dickens took a stroll to kill time. Ending up in the Canongate Kirkyard, he stumbled upon the grave of “Ebenezer Scroggie – Mealman. Dickens, in a mild dyslexic state, read the gravestone as Ebenezer Scrooge – Meanman. The author’s imagination led him to stew over how this man had deserved such a title in death, and thus the legend of Ebenezer Scrooge was born. – True?- Who Knows.

Edinburgh in Christmas Present

Almost all visitors (93%) to Edinburgh’s Christmas said the Christmas celebrations influenced their decision to visit the Scottish capital and for those already living in the

city, the question focused on their decision to visit the city centre - again, almost all (96%) said Edinburgh’s Christmas was an important reason for visiting the city centre. A fantastic 99% rated the quality of their experience as very good or good and 8 out of 10 visitors would be very likely to recommend Edinburgh’s Christmas.

Edinburgh in Christmas Future

Edinburgh residents get the full benefits of the Christmas festivities, however there are concerns about the effect this has on the Princes Street Gardens. Social media has raised concerns about the lengthy closures following these events to allow the gardens to ‘recover’.

Council chiefs have pledged to give the people of Edinburgh their biggest ever say on the future of festivities which are now more than 20 years old. Senior councillors have ordered the review months after the launch of a campaign to “defend” Edinburgh against over-tourism, the privatisation of public space and the impact of “festivalisation.”

Win a £25 Shopping voucher in our Christmas Quiz



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1. The Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square, London is an annual gift from which nation?
2. If a person was given all the gifts in the song “The Twelve days of Christmas”, how many gifts in total would they receive?
3. “Christmas won’t be Christmas without any presents” is the opening line from which classic novel?
4. In “The Grinch Who Stole Christmas” why

was The Grinch so mean?

5. Who were “Walking Backwards to Christmas”, in song in 1956?
6. What Christmas item was first commercially designed by John Halcott Horsley in 1843?
7. In which Bond film does the character Dr Christmas Jones appear?
8. In which pantomime did Wishee Washee appear?

Please send your answers to Heather Jeffrie at Viewpoint Housing Association, 4 South Oswald Road, Edinburgh EH9 2HG or email them to tp@viewpoint.org.uk by **Friday 3 January 2020**. Alternatively give your answers to your co-ordinator and they will pass them on. Winner will be the first correct answers taken drawn out the hat on the **6 January 2020**.



Gluttony is Illegal!

It’s technically illegal to eat mince pies on Christmas Day in England. In the 17th century, Oliver Cromwell banned Christmas pudding, mince pies and anything to do with gluttony. The law has never been rescinded. Good thing we live in Scotland!

VIEWPOINT
 joy in later years

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