

THE HOUSING SUPPORT REVIEW: Where we are and where we are going?

At the end of last year, our Director of Housing & Support, Esther Wilson, sent out a letter informing you about the pending housing support review. If you are new to Viewpoint or are simply not aware of what is happening, here is an update.

In the past few years, local authorities across the UK have been under financial pressure, and in November *Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership* confirmed that they would no longer be able to continue funding housing support services in housing for older adults in Edinburgh. Due to this withdrawal of funding and the desire to be creative, we want to engage with you, our tenants, and our staff to undertake a review that will support the redesign of our traditional sheltered housing model of support.

The overall aim of the review is to identify any positive adjustments that could be made to develop a service that meets your needs, sustains your independence and which is financially sustainable. The re-design of our service will be based on what you tell us during the tenant research stages of this project.

Who will this affect?

We are specifically looking at the services within sheltered, enhanced sheltered, and alarmed properties within Edinburgh. That said, we are also keen to learn from the experiences of our tenants who have already gone through this process in Fife.

Where is the project at so far?

The first important step in the project is understanding your needs and the services which you rely on the most. In order to achieve this, the project team is going to bring on board expert consultants who will help with this substantial undertaking. In February, the team invited experienced agencies to submit detailed proposals to carry out this work. The project team is currently assessing the submitted proposals and in the process of selecting the agency that best demonstrates their ability to meet the needs of the project.

What is coming next?

As soon as the consultants have been appointed, the project team will write to you

to inform you of the details of the successful agency and will be asking you how you would like to be involved in this stage of the project. We expect this communication to go out early in April.

When the consultants are ready to begin connecting with tenants, the project team will be in touch with you again to inform you about the arrangements for contact. The team expect this information will go out in mid to late April.

The project team want you to know that we take your safety and security seriously. Please note that you will not be contacted without being advised when, how, and by whom the contact will be made.

Key Information about the project

- Our current services will remain the same during the service redesign review.
- You will be consulted on proposed service models before any changes are made.
- Any proposed changes will not take effect until April 2022.
- You will be advised by Viewpoint on when, how, and by whom contact about this project will be made prior to anyone contacting you.
- The team will provide future updates on the project through Newspoint.
- Pamela and Christopher are very much looking forward to working with you on this project.

Contacting the project team

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to get in touch with the project team by email at hsreviewproject@viewpoint.org.uk or by telephone on **0131 668 0355** during normal business hours. Should you already have ideas and wishes on how you would like to participate in this phase of the project, the team are eager to hear your thoughts.

Who are the project team?

Pamela Paton

Project Team Manager

Pamela been with Viewpoint since September 2020 and took on this new role at the end of December. Pamela comes from a Health & Social Care background and has focused her career on developing and delivering excellent housing support services that support people to maintain independence within community settings.

Fun fact: Pamela is madly in love with her five-year-old Yorkshire terrier, Vinnie, who likes to attend online meetings with her.

Christopher Palmiotto

Project Team Officer

Christopher is new to Viewpoint and informs, "I have received a very warm welcome in my first few weeks; everyone I have met has been very helpful and supportive. I have jumped right into this project, and I look forward to meeting our tenants as soon as possible."

Fun Fact: Christopher was raised in Italy, and is fully bilingual in English and Italian.

Our Opening Hours at Easter

Please note our offices are closed over the Easter Weekend:

- Friday 3 April and Monday 5 April 2021

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.

Remember our offices are currently closed to visitors but you can contact us in the following ways:

Telephone: **0131 668 4247**

Email: admin@viewpoint.org.uk

By letter: 4 South Oswald Road,
Edinburgh, EH9 2HG

A Chance for you to Have your say

Enclosed with Newspoint there are two leaflets. One giving you the opportunity to vote for our new strapline and the other seeking your views about our pet keeping policy, prior to review. There is a freepost envelope for you to return these and they can be put in the same envelope. Alternatively you can email tp@viewpoint.org.uk



OUR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2021-22

Jean Gray, Chief Executive

In 2019, the Board approved our strategic direction for the year 2020/21 as well as the organisation's intentions for the following three years. Of course, on agreeing the direction of travel the sector was unprepared for the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Board has agreed to carry over the outstanding objectives into a further one year Strategic Plan. The plan should align our ambitions to our capacity and our charitable status and take cognisance of the social and economic challenges facing the organisation but more importantly our customers and communities.

As a marker, it is fair to state at this point that Viewpoint is still on the journey to consolidate present changes, amass information, and undertake feasibilities. We had hoped to be further in this journey but like others in the sector, the impact of the pandemic has significantly affected our ability to deliver key services. It is also only fair to point out that this pandemic and any other remains a threat so there is a possibility that the overall impact on the deliverability of some of our objectives could continue to be delayed from April onwards.

Viewpoint's current stock is spread across Edinburgh, Lothians & Fife. There is a need to be honest about how fit our housing stock is both in terms of condition and for older people. Our stock is difficult, it is old and unique with little uniformity, which means it is more complex and requires a high level of costs to look after than that of many of our peers. While we have data on the condition of our stock, we do not yet have a robust assessment of its current and future suitability.

Our future investment needs to be informed not only by the condition of our stock but also its current and long term suitability for our client group. This will be determined by the ongoing work of our asset management strategy.

The current 'housing support' service delivered by our Housing Co-ordinators, is, in reality, a blend of landlord health and safety activities, housing management, estate management and housing support tasks. This service is now under review after the notification of the decommissioning of the housing support element by the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, this will complete by April 2022.

The social care sector is currently under intense scrutiny. This is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future. Statutory services have been under financial pressure since the 2008 crash, and receding, for some time. The full impact of Covid-19 on public services finance and the public sector itself is so far unclear but will undoubtedly be concerning as we try to plan our future direction.

Our staff are key to the delivery of the strategic

plan. We started a redesign of our teams in 2019 and introduced some changes as we aim to improve customer relations; internal and external communication; streamline services; empower staff; build teams and in general become a more inclusive organisation. The pandemic halted the process and it is now our intention to relaunch the project and reintroduce the key objectives to benefit both the organisation and our tenants and residents.

With the backdrop of our current activities, the uncertain political agenda and the recognition that significant housing and care challenges still exist within our communities, we want to continue to engage and consult with a wide range of people, partner agencies and organisations to ensure we are addressing the unmet needs that still exist. The success of the implementation of the current and any future strategic plan relies on continued engagement and consultation with our tenants, residents, families and the wider communities and we need to be open, listening and responsive. This means we need to be more innovative in our methodology particularly as face-to-face communication is limited and we do not know how long this will continue.

What we hope to achieve through our strategic outcomes over the next year 2021/22:

- ▶ Develop a communication strategy and customer charter with tenants and residents
- ▶ We will gather evidence to help us understand the needs of our customers. This will enable us to plan how we can help them either directly or indirectly. We will also gather further evidence relating to our stock to ensure we make informed decisions regarding investment.
- ▶ We will aim in this year to deliver a challenging planned maintenance programme as we begin significant investment into our existing stock ensuring they are energy efficient and fit for the future with a focus on affordability; value for money and deliverability. We will also aim to keep our rents affordable as poverty is a significant issue for many
- ▶ We will continue to deliver our Dementia Strategy across all our services and will assist people to adapt their homes to meet their needs to ensure they have a home for life.
- ▶ We will continue to consolidate our work, assess our systems, plan change, whilst taking cognisance of the time it will take to deliver as we remain under specific restrictions due to the pandemic. Our aim is to improve our business;

modernise systems; focus on customers; improve our existing assets where we consider it is value for money and empower our staff.

- ▶ We will also seek to identify other high quality flexible services targeted to improving the lives of our tenants, residents and customers.
- ▶ Continue to review our models of care including staffing; develop a marketing strategy particularly for our care home.
- ▶ We will ensure we have astute financial management to ensure we can maximise our impact and protect our longer-term position, including the affordability of our range of both housing, housing support and care services.
- ▶ We believe we can improve the effectiveness of our systems and improve their transparency. We can evidence what we do better. As we continue to review our systems, we will target inefficient processes and identify a plan to continually improve
- ▶ We are committed to the evolution of our digital journey with the intention of changing our mind-set to thinking 'digital first'. We will look at empowering tenants, residents and staff, improving the use of technology in our homes as well as continuing the improvement, security and speed of our own systems to support these changes.
- ▶ We will continue to invest in our people to enable them to deliver the best services that we can but also to allow them to grow and develop within the organisation.

What is clear is that we need to deliver our promises to our tenants and residents whether it be in levels of care, adaptations to existing properties or providing homes for people in need. The only way we can deliver our objectives is working together, communicating with each other and more importantly with you, our tenants and residents. I appreciate the last year has been difficult for us all and there has been added frustrations especially with the lack of face to face communication. Many of you have said to me that we still have a long way to go in achieving good communication and we realise that going forward Viewpoint will only deliver its objectives if we continue to listen and learn. As CEO I hope that 2021/22 is a better year for us all and that we are able to deliver the outcomes we have identified for the next year and beyond.



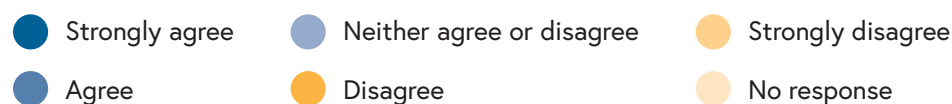
Rent and Service Charge Changes Agreed for 2021/2022

Thanks to all of you who provided feedback as part of our rent and service charge consultation at the end of last year and earlier this year.

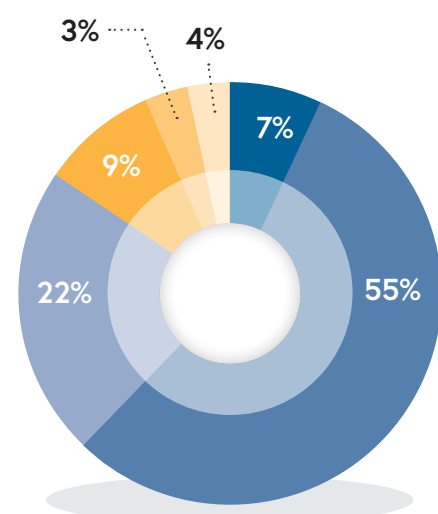
At Viewpoint's Board Meeting on the 9 February 2021, consideration was given by the Board to all of your feedback plus other financial information provided by the Association. The proposal to apply a 2% increase to rent and to service charges (other than landscaping) was approved and this will take effect from 1 April 2021. There will be no increase in the landscaping service charge. By the time you read this, you will have received your letter advising what your rent and service charges will be for the coming year.

228 surveys were completed (17% return) and a full report provided to Viewpoint's Board in February. The report is available on our website and if you wish a printed copy please contact us and we will send you one.

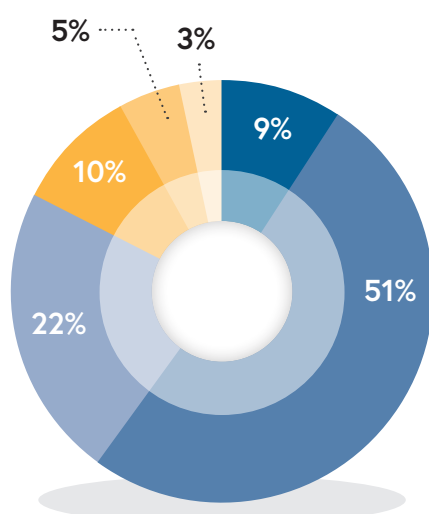
Here is the feedback from the questions we asked:



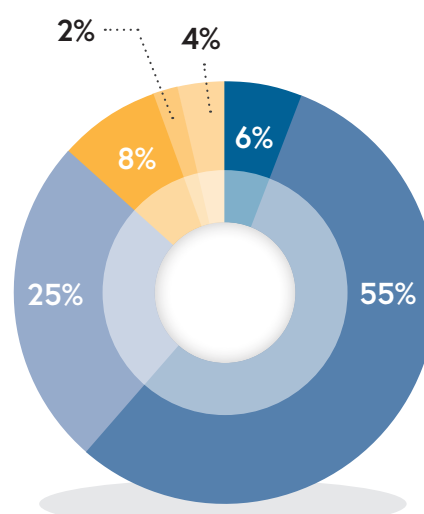
Do you agree that a rent increase is necessary to maintain services and investment in our stock?



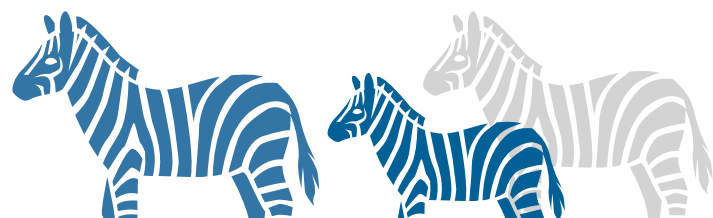
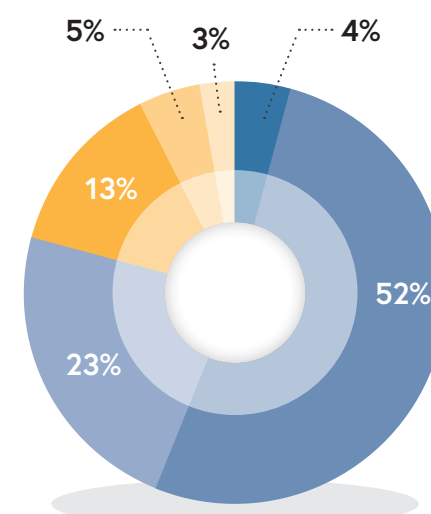
Do you feel you get value for money from Viewpoint?



Do you feel your rent is affordable?



Do you think the service charges are fair and affordable?



Red Zebras Seen on Princes Street!

Well that got your attention. But before you move onto the next newsletter article give me a couple of moments of your time.

Tenant Participation – the very words maybe put you off, but really there are so many things you can do to do be involved and help shape what Viewpoint does.

Recruitment

Would you like to be involved in the recruitment of Viewpoint Staff? Many of our interviews for front line posts have involved a tenant (or tenants) who have taken an active part in the interview and decision making process.

We provide full support and assistance so that you can take part confidently and help recruit our new staff. You will also get the chance to meet the staff members on the panel. It can be very rewarding and good fun.

Want to have a chat about this – call Heather on **0131 662 5142** or email tp@viewpoint.org.uk

And if recruitment is not your thing perhaps you want to have an input into how we communicate with you, or perhaps look at our performance and discuss with staff what the issues are – and the solutions. Then there is the editorial team for this newsletter - and much more. Just contact Heather and she will be happy to talk you through opportunities.



Delay in Delivering Winter 2020 Newspoint

As you know, we try to ensure that Newspoint is delivered before Christmas.

This year was no exception and Newspoint was posted out between 11 and 14 December 2020. Some of you did not receive this until after Christmas and I know a couple of people who did not get their copy until 5 January 2021.

I can only apologise for this but it appears that the change in the Covid restrictions at Christmas resulted in the Post Office being overwhelmed by parcels and letters at the last minute.

This was beyond our control, but again my apologies to those affected.



Tenant Board Member Steps Down After 10 Years' Service

Jean Simpson is a tenant at Inverleith Gardens. She was also one of the tenant representatives on the Board, until March this year when she retired after ten and half years' service.

We caught up with Jean to find out more about her time on the Board and what her plans are now.

How long have you been a viewpoint tenant?

I moved to Inverleith Gardens in 2006 after I retired from working as a Coordinator with Viewpoint.

Why did you want to be on the Board?

I never planned it that way. I was at a tenant meeting and one of the staff said they were looking for tenant Board members and, would I be interested in applying. I said not really but was sent the application form anyway. I filled it in, never thinking for a moment that it would go any further. Then I had an interview and was elected onto the Board. I was Viewpoint's first tenant board member.

Do you think being a tenant has helped you being a Board member?

Yes I do. I had first-hand experience of what it was like to be a tenant, which I think is very important as sometimes I look at things from a different perspective. In addition, I had worked with various charities and could bring that experience to the table.

Do tenants ask you to deal with individual queries and how do you deal with that?

Being on the Board is looking at the bigger picture for the organisation. It is important to understand that I cannot take individual queries to the Board; however, I can point people in the right direction to get their issues resolved. Moreover, hearing about these individual issues can help me when discussing the strategic issues at Board meetings.

“ I raised £300 for Diabetes and £200 for my church. ”

What kind of preparation do you do for a Board meeting?

I like to be well prepared for meetings and will read all the papers and then take notes or focus in on specific issues that are being discussed. Papers are received a week before the meeting and over the week I will spend about 5 or 6 hours in preparation. I have also been involved in subcommittees and working groups as a Board member.

What kind of training and support do you get?

We have a buddy system, which means that when you start you are partnered up with a more experienced Board member. There is lots of support from everyone – other Board members and staff. Training opportunities are also available, which is helpful as legislation is always changing and can sometimes be quite complex.

What has been the best thing about being on the Board?

The people you meet – other Board members the staff and tenants. I used to try and go to tenant meetings in different areas as it is important to find out what tenants are thinking and to feed that back.

What has been the worst thing about being on the Board?

I do not think there really has been a worst thing. Probably lockdown and doing all the meetings online.

I hear that you took up the mask making challenge with vigour and that through this you raised money for charity. Tell me more about this and whom you raised money for?

My great grandson was diagnosed with diabetes during lockdown so I decided to raise some money for Diabetes UK. I initially gave the masks I made away but then sold them for charity. I also made and sold marmalade, Christmas cards and cake.

I raised £300 for Diabetes and £200 for my church.

What will you do with your time now you are no longer on the Board?

I will miss being on the Board but I have lots of stuff I want to do. I love all kinds of crafting, such as sewing, knitting, crochet, making cards. I also play bridge, am involved in church activities, I love reading and listening to audio books, and being part of two book clubs.... All things I do now but more time to do them

What would you say to other tenants who are thinking about getting involved and may, in the future, want to be on the Board?

I would really encourage you to do it. It is really rewarding and you can get involved in other committees or projects as a Board member. There is always something interesting going on. It is good to be involved and support Viewpoint in a positive way.

“ There is always something interesting going on. ”

Jean Gray CEO said 'I would like to thank Jean for her services to Viewpoint over the last ten and a half years. Board service is one of the toughest volunteer roles of all, and Jean has tirelessly given her time and resources to not only the Viewpoint Board but a number of sub-committees always with a focus on the vision and values of what we aim to achieve.

She has been a judicious steward of the organisation, shown continual dedication and tenacity and has never flinched in the face of making difficult business decisions maintaining a measured and non-biased approach at all times.

On both a professional and personal level I would like to thank Jean for everything she has done for Viewpoint and for her ongoing commitment and support through the recent challenging times. I hope, despite retiring from the Board, that Jean will continue to participate in the organisation through our tenant consultation groups and share her experience, knowledge and prowess with others.'

Who are the Tenant Representatives on Viewpoint's Board?

Jack Clyne from Balfour House has been co-opted onto the Board following Jean Simpson's retirement.

John Muir from Buchan Gardens is the other tenant representative and has been on the Board for a year.

In the Autumn edition of Newspoint, we will catch up with Jack and John to find out how they are doing.



Introducing New Staff at Viewpoint



**ASSETS
TEAM
LEADER**
**Derek
Szoneberg**

I am very pleased to have been given the opportunity to take on the Assets Team Leader role here at Viewpoint.

My previous role of Technical Team Leader at Berwickshire Housing Association had a lot of similar challenges but at the same time the different stock types here makes it quite unique in a number of ways.

I have been made most welcome and look forward to gaining more experience out and about, once we see some easing of the current lockdown. Meantime, we are working hard to progress a number of contracts at all different stages and look at ways to improve the level of service we receive from new and old contractors and how we effectively manage them to deliver these on a daily basis.



**HOUSING
ADVISOR**
**Jackie
Clarke**

I joined the Housing Team as a Housing Advisor in February, and like everyone else am working from home. I will be working on a Monday and Tuesday with Viewpoint and I am really looking forward to getting to know you all.

In addition to working part time with Viewpoint, I work part time at the Columcille Centre in Edinburgh, which provides a range of creative activities for adults with learning disabilities. I enjoy doing creative things so I really do enjoy helping others at the centre.

Before working with Viewpoint, I worked for many years with Edinburgh City Council at The Access Point in Leith. My job there was with homeless people (mainly rough sleepers) with complex needs. The work was very challenging but I really enjoyed helping people find solutions to the problems they faced.

Call Recording – How will it work?

Since the last edition of Newpoint, our Housing and Business Support Team have been working hard behind the scenes to set up call recording to allow us to start recording certain calls from 5th April 2021.

We are aware you may have some questions about this service so we have tried to answer a few of them:

Why are some calls going to be recorded?

The implementation of recording of telephone calls supports effective training and delivery of high standards of customer service. It enables Viewpoint to deal efficiently and effectively with internal or external complaints.

How will I know my call is being recorded?

- ▶ Incoming calls - Customers will be informed that calls might be recorded for training and monitoring purposes in the recorded message activated on connection to the main telephone number during Viewpoint's opening hours.
- ▶ Outgoing calls - Staff whose telephone extensions have been set up for call recording will tell you at the beginning of each phone call if your call will be recorded

Which calls will be recorded?

The call recording function will only be activated for designated Housing Team and Repairs Team staff telephone extensions at the present time.

Do you need Newpoint in a different format?

We want to make sure that we communicate with you, in a format that suits your needs.

We have started to produce Newpoint in large print and to make it available on CD. If you wish to receive Newpoint in either of these formats, please let us know. On the other hand, if you need an alternative format you should also let us know. Speak to your Co-ordinator or telephone our office and we will update our records accordingly.

Please note that we are currently looking at ways to meet your communication preferences automatically in the future – watch this space!

What will you do with the recordings?

Call recordings will be automatically recorded, stored securely and automatically deleted after 3 months. Limited staff have access to listen to call recordings only where there is sufficient business justification. Examples include:

- ▶ Checking accuracy
- ▶ When a complaint has been received
- ▶ Responding to a Data Protection Subject Access Request
- ▶ For staff training purposes to improve customer service quality and skills.
- ▶ To help protect staff from abusive or nuisance calls

Where a decision is made to keep the recording for longer than 3 months it is saved to our system, only kept for the period necessary, and deleted in accordance with the timescales specified within Viewpoint's Data Retention Policy. For more information, please refer to our Privacy Policy and Fair Processing Notice, which are available on our website.

Will you share recordings with anyone?

Call recordings will be treated by us as confidential and will be processed only by designated senior staff members. We may disclose call recordings to third parties for the purposes set out below:

- ▶ If you are dissatisfied with our response to your complaint and refer the issue to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, we would have to provide evidence of our response to you with them.
- ▶ If you are dissatisfied with our response to your Subject Access Request and refer the issue to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), we would have to provide evidence of our response to you with the ICO.
- ▶ Call recordings might be used as evidence for investigations in line with our Unacceptable Actions Policy or Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. In these cases, they might be shared with solicitors and/or Police Scotland.

Texting Service - Our Apologies

You will be aware that we launched our texting service on 16 December 2020 with a welcome text.

You will also be aware that you will have received this 4 or even 5 times. This was a system error, where the text service did not recognise that the text had been sent. It has taken us some time to get this fixed but it is now, hopefully, operating the way it should. We can only apologise for this and thank you all for being so patient and understanding.

VIEWPOINT'S BUDGET SETTING PROCESS

Howard Vaughan, Director of Finance and Assets

As part of our rent and service charge consultation we were asked about how budgets were set and how these decisions were made.

Viewpoint is a relatively unusual organisation within the social care sector in that we provide both housing and care homes.

Accordingly we have to ensure that both parts of the business are financially sustainable. Whilst we are a not for profit organisation this means that we do need to generate some surplus in order for us to continue to reinvest in our properties; your homes.

There are obviously costs directly attributable to our housing and to our care homes, but additionally there are central costs which are required to support the organisation as a whole. These include asset maintenance, finance, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Human Resources. Also included within these central support costs there are also a number of areas which benefit you directly such

as ICT spend on Wi-Fi, screens in complexes, Tap Into IT, maintenance officers; tenant participation and housing benefit advice.

We have to cover all our costs through rent and service charges for our housing tenants and through fees for our care home residents.

Early each year we start work on the organisational budget for the following financial year. At this stage every department looks at what they will need for their department to function efficiently for the next year to be able to continue to provide and wherever possible improve our existing service delivery.

In 2017/18 we carried out a housing rent and service charge review and as a result we consolidated the bulk of the costs we have to cover into your rent charge. The rent is based

on the type of home you live in, the number of bedrooms and level of staff support your complex receives.

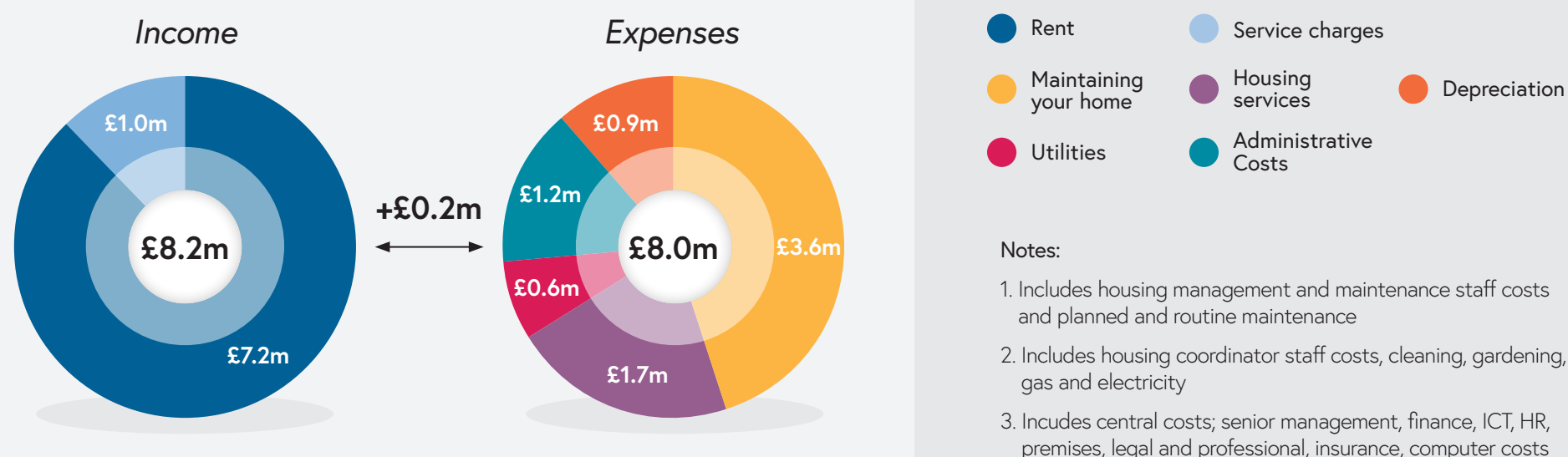
We also at that time took the opportunity to simplify the service charge structure so that you only pay for specific services you receive.

More recently we also simplified and consolidated the fee structure for our care homes.

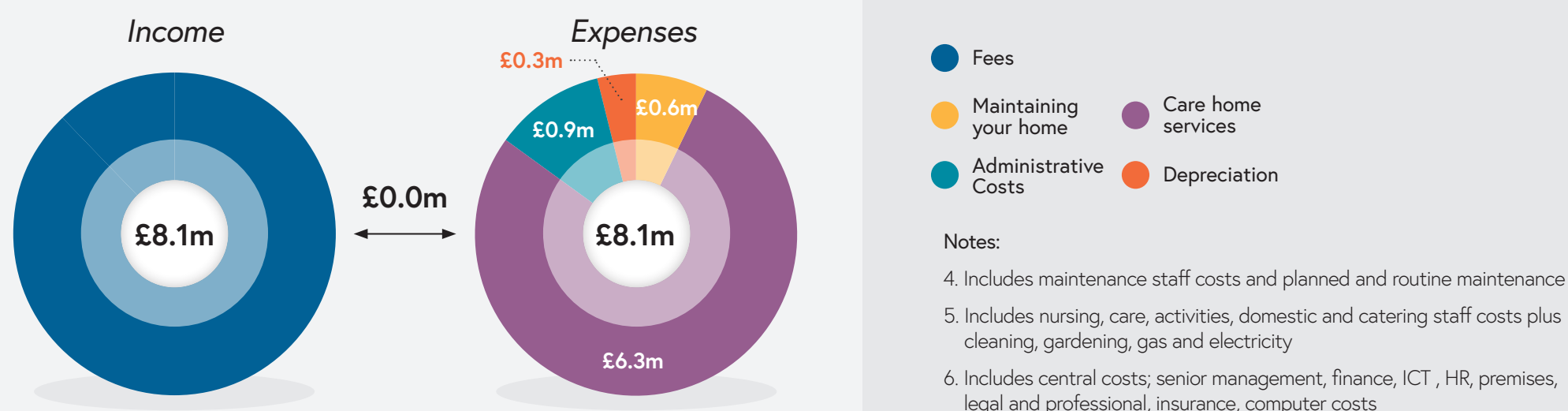
The following tables show the budget for the coming financial year - 2021/22 for both the housing and care home elements of the business.

These budgets were approved by the Board of Viewpoint at their meeting in February 2021.

Housing



Care Homes



As you will see from the two budget tables above our surpluses for the next year are low. Normally our surpluses would be higher enabling us to create sufficient reserves to invest in our properties. We have also had to include an ongoing allowance in next year's budget for additional costs which we expect to incur as a result of Covid e.g. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), additional cleaning, agency staff costs to cover staff sickness etc.

The Board is satisfied that the organisation remains financially robust to weather the current Covid crisis and were keen that the budget for the next year generated an overall surplus. We remain in a strong financial position whereby we can now utilise our existing reserves to honour our commitment to invest over the coming years.



Repairs Update

By Derek Szoneberg

Whilst we had successfully worked to clear the backlog from the 1st lockdown period and gain some normality with regards providing a full Repairs service, we quickly found ourselves in the run up to Christmas, heading back to a 2nd lockdown.

Given the nature of a high number of these repairs and our commitment to have works carried out urgently to ensure issues are not allowed to escalate or cause greater damage as well as making our properties safe for living under the current guidelines, we are pleased to have been able to issue almost 1500 repairs and currently have less than 50 other repairs waiting to be processed as soon as the government guidelines allow.

We hope to be able to ask the contractors to arrange appointments during March/April for work in May in line with proposed easing of restrictions. We are extremely grateful for the hard work of all of our contractors, in particular R3, who have carried out almost 50% of these repairs. We continue to work closely with R3 to develop a strong working relationship, which will shortly result in a large part of the reporting/monitoring process being fully automated. We are also working to agree a more robust process of monitoring tenant satisfaction where not only R3, but all are concerned. They have also kindly provided us with some narrative on them as an organisation and how they look to work with us as we go forward.

R3 is a wholly owned subsidiary of the charity East Lothian Housing Association, a provider of social housing just like your own housing provider, Viewpoint Housing Association. This means that the profits we make go straight back into providing more social housing for people much like you.

We also work with other Housing Associations across Edinburgh the Lothians and the Scottish Borders, including Berwickshire, Eildon, Hanover and Hillcrest Housing Associations as well as our parent East Lothian HA. We employ local people wherever we work and partner with local suppliers and specialist contractors.

We currently have 45 employees across all trades and have managed to keep all of them with us over the current pandemic, while also managing to bring in another two young apprentices straight from school, one in our warehouse in Wallyford and one in our office in Haddington. This is in no small part due to the work we are doing with Viewpoint and we have plans to expand our workforce by a further six locally recruited workers once we are able to get back to a more normal way of working as pandemic restrictions are eased.

We take our commitment to quality and safety seriously with a manager dedicated to Viewpoint and all of our trade operatives fully briefed on what they need to do to provide a first class service to you, our customers. This is obviously especially important just now but the commitment to a quality service runs through what we do from our roots in a local Housing Association.

That's not all we do though, if you manage to get out and about once we are allowed to, you might see our vans at places such as the Royal Yacht Britannia or Dynamic Earth. This isn't our staff sneaking off for some illicit rest and recreation; it's them providing the same high level of service to our commercial clients. Being in business now since April 2010, we have built up a solid reputation for quality and in house expertise that lets us develop strong relationships with our partners and clients that everyone, including you, should benefit from.



Viewpoint's Commitment to Invest in Your Homes

Viewpoint made a commitment at the start of the 2020/21 financial year that we would invest £5m per year in our properties over the next three years. Unfortunately this was before the impact of Covid-19 was known.

We have been able throughout the year to continue carrying out emergency repairs and essential landlord health and safety checks e.g. annual gas boiler services together with external work e.g. roof replacements. There have also been additional costs such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), additional cleaning, agency staff costs to cover staff sickness etc. which we have covered in the current year and included an ongoing allowance in next year's budget.

The Covid access restrictions have however prevented us fulfilling this £5m commitment in the current year. Consequently we will extend this three year commitment into a fourth year and in the budget for 2021/22 we have increased the anticipated spend from £5m to £5.5m.

The anticipated works will include;

- ▶ Heating Replacements (see separate article for full update on this)
- ▶ Bathrooms
- ▶ Kitchens
- ▶ Windows
- ▶ Boundary Walls
- ▶ Roofs
- ▶ Lighting Upgrades
- ▶ Lift Replacement



Obviously the roll out of this programme of works will depend on how quickly Covid restrictions are eased but we have been doing a significant amount of preparatory work during lockdown to enable us to make quick progress on these plans as soon as we are able to do so.

Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) Programme

In Scotland, Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 covers requirements on general fire safety, supported by the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006. As a landlord, Viewpoint Housing Association (VHA) has a responsibility to ensure that the buildings it manages are safe and to carry out FRAs to identify what could cause a fire to start, i.e. sources of ignition (heat or sparks) and substances that burn, and the people who may be at risk. Each FRA is specific to the premises where it is undertaken. The recommendations from the FRA ensure that adequate and appropriate fire safety measures are in place to minimise the risk of injury or loss of life in the event of a fire. The assessment process evaluates risk from fire and how to keep the users of the premises safe in the event of a fire. The assessor follows a process when looking at the premises including; the activities and occupants of the premises, the potential for a fire to occur, the harm it could cause to people, an evaluation of the existing fire safety measures and any recommended improvements.

VHA commissioned a specialist contractor with the necessary qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience to carry out 53 FRAs between June and September 2020. The recommended actions that came out of the programme of FRAs are currently being implemented across our schemes.





Heating projects update by Colin Dumma

In our winter 2020 edition of Newpoint we provided an update on our plans for replacement heating and hot water systems.

Unfortunately, with the reintroduction of the full lockdown just after Christmas our progress has been frustratingly slow in that our external consultants have still not been able to gain access to our properties to carry out the evaluations into alternative systems.

The Energy Efficiency Standards for Social Housing (ESSH) encourages social landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their tenant's homes and contributes to the requirements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019. Two milestones have been set and the first one was to be achieved by December 2020, however this was extended due to the current Covid-19 pandemic to March 2021. The second milestone for ESSH2 is December 2032. Both standards set minimum energy ratings that properties should achieve. Viewpoint is working towards meeting these deadlines and targets and where possible we will try to achieve compliance with ESSH2 as early as possible.

As part of meeting both ESSH deadlines, we need to look at renewable energy options for heating and hot water replacements. This means we are considering which of our sites we may be able to install ground source heat pumps, (GSHP), air source heat pumps (ASHP), biomass and other options to meet the standards and the drive away from fossil fuels such as natural gas. These types of heating systems are a big step away from traditional gas and are generally very expensive to install but we

are looking at external funding sources that are available and where we qualify for support this will reduce the financial impact on Viewpoint. Lack of available ground space etc. and tight planning controls in some areas may mean we have to remain with a gas-fired system for the time being. In these situations, we will look at including highly efficient boilers to manage energy costs. For all types of heating system upgrades or renewals we will also look at a holistic approach to each site, this may also include insulation and window upgrades where these are required, and funding is available. Where possible we will also look to include solar thermal or Photovoltaics (PV) systems. Solar thermal can support or provide energy for hot water generation whereas solar PV can generate electricity to support lighting and power systems.

We understand that a move away from a traditional gas fired system, and in some cases, a communal system will be a major change to many tenants. In these instances we will be consulting with tenants prior to works going ahead and we intend to engage the services of impartial external service providers to give everyone involved guidance on the correct use of their new system to save energy costs and achieve the required levels of heat and comfort. As we progress our plans we will write to every tenant included in any of these works as early as possible and outline our proposals and what the process will be.

A Thank you to St Raphs

Dear St R's

Thank you

For smiling faces,
For red wine ready on the table for tea,
For a home that didn't smell like 'a home',
For specially picked out nature programmes and football on the TV,
For the cellists that brought a tear to the eye,
For Lily the cat's adventures through the window,
For putting up pictures and straightening the bird table,
For biscuits and tea,
For parties and singing,
For bacon rolls and ice cream,
For nothing ever being a bother,
For putting like-minded souls together,
For helping us through the first few weeks,
For newly made friends,
For conquering ulcers and distributing the right pills,
For putting water out on the bird table,
For being there and risking yourselves through Covid,
For a spotless room,
For 'hello handsome, Jim, James, Pops, and Sir',
For George's Saturday films, especially the Tattoo,
For the night time staff we never got to know,
For heads round the doorway just to say hello,
For 'Your favourite daughter is on the phone',
For always picking out the right clothes and being ready for outings,
For never patronising,

For dominos, duke box and magic table,
For an endless supply of hugs,
For playing with hair and trimming the beard,
For good manners and respectfulness,
For never being impatient,
For being gentle and kind,
For beautifully trimmed nails,
For always looking up and giving a wave,
For preserving dignity,
For well-chosen words,
For shrieks of laughter,
For chats about hot flushes in the corridor,
For the magnolia tree in bloom,
For uploading smiling images,
For the diary wall,
For cups of tea and chat in the Art café,
For holding all of our hands,
For decorations ,
For roses on Valentine's day,
For cut out cars and Elvis wigs,
For opening the door,
For joking around and having a laugh,
For window visits,
For commenting on art work,
For 'my driver' and the beloved bus trips,
For moving the bed,
for being there when we couldn't be.

All our love and gratitude
From his family

Happy 90th Birthday Vivian



Described by a friend as 'The cuddliest tenant at Old Farm Court'

We hope you had a lovely day and best wishes from everyone





Christmas Surprise for Buchan Gardens by Danny Rankin (Buchan Gardens)

Buchan Gardens has been preparing for Christmas 2020. Lights were installed around a few of the houses to show a little cheer for the residents in this awful pandemic. As we can't use our hall for the festivities, the Buchan Gardens Tenants Group decided to organise a little surprise for the tenants.

We approached our local 'Mary Bradford Singers' to see if they would be able to help us out. Mary suggested that one of her singers would be available to come and sing some Christmas songs. This was organised for a Saturday evening. Unfortunately, the weather had other ideas and we had to cancel. Unperturbed by this we organised the event for the following Thursday evening. Between these times our singer had a visit to A&E where she found out she had torn ligaments in her ankle. Some of the time she had to sit in a wheelchair to sing! You can see her 'moon boot' on one of the photographs.

A flyer was passed round the houses to let the residents know when the singing would commence. Our singer, Lily Mentiplay, arrived with her mother and Mary Bradford and set up their equipment outside ready to start at the designated time. Some tenants were already standing at their

doors in anticipation. Lily then started to sing her collection of Christmas songs. They were all well known songs and our tenants joined in with the singing. Lily sang to us for around 20 minutes. As Buchan Gardens has three 'circles' of houses it was intended that Lily would sing in each 'circle'. Unfortunately the weather changed again and started to rain. We managed to set up Lily's equipment at the entrance to our hall which gave a wee bit of shelter. As the weather got worse we had to end early with the third 'circle' unfortunately missing out.

Everyone who heard Lily singing had a great time and it brought a wee bit of cheer to this horrible time. We plan to have Lily back once this terrible pandemic has passed and have her sing in the comfort of our own hall. We all thanked Lily, her mother and Mary Bradford for cheering everyone up with her lovely singing.



Page Turners @ Viewpoint By Moira Winton

The Page Turners @Viewpoint is our online book club and has been running for three months now. Currently we have four members and one 'co-ordinator', (namely Heather Jeffrie of Newspoint Extra fame). At the moment we are using Zoom which is working well as it offers a very steady platform and is easy to download on to whichever device you are using and easy to navigate.

The 'club' meet once a month to discuss the book of the month. Fortunately, all the participants, at the moment, are more than happy to offer their thoughts about the books. Which characters we particularly liked, which we didn't, what surprised us in the book perhaps what we would have liked to see happen at the end. Sometimes things that annoyed us and things that pleased us, even how it made us feel. On one occasion how it compared to the film.

Obviously, we do tend to go off piste a little at times but that all adds to the fun of the chat.

What I particularly like about the book club is that it encourages me to read books that I would never have thought of reading. Getting input from different people really is a great way to explore different genres, which is sometimes what we all need.

The book club, for me, changes the way I now read a book. It makes me

think about what I'm reading, how it makes me feel, is it boring, is it exciting, does it make me happy, conversely, does it make me sad, is it hard to put down or a thought to pick up. The discussion at the meeting also makes you think about things differently when you listen to another point of view.

Then of course, there's the discussion about what to read next. Some of the members are avid readers, others perhaps not so, however, the discussion is always lively and options, if not numerous, always varied and finally agreed. We always try to find the best place to obtain the required book, be it from the library (on-line) or which retailer is offering the best price.

All in all, it makes for a good read, a good discussion and a very pleasant way to spend an hour of our lockdown afternoon.

So, if you enjoy a good read or even if you're not much of a reader and want to get involved with the group, you'd be more than welcome to join us. The more the merrier. It's by no means a serious or studious group, just a collection of readers getting together to share their thoughts on what we've read. Come and join us!

Contact Heather on tp@viewpoint.org.uk or telephone 0131 662 5142





Around the Houses

Despite lockdown and all the restrictions you face you have still managed to send me many photographs. I have enjoyed looking at them all.

Christmas at Haugh Park

We have the Botanic Gardens, Princes Street and now Haugh Park. Tenants were determined not to miss out on the Christmas decorations that are normally put up in the lounge. The lights came on at 4pm each night for a few hours and gave the place a Christmas spirit and a cheery glow.

Ann, once again, spoiled everyone by making them a Christmas goodie box, which she delivered on 21 December.

And if that was not enough the children at Longstone Primary School made Christmas cards for all the tenants – what a wonderful thoughtful thing for them to do.

More recently Ann made heart shaped biscuits for Valentine's day and noted that it was a full year since their last proper coffee morning in the lounge.



Northwood in the Snow

I am sure by the time you read this the snow will all be gone. Here is a photograph taken early in the year with the first fall of snow at dusk. It looks stunning.



The tenants at Northwood had a Christmas tree in the open conservatory to give the place a cheery feel.



Woodwork at Lynedoch Place

Mr Shiels, from Lynedoch Place, made these wonderful wooden toys. They are truly amazing and I am sure you will agree that Mr Shiels is very talented.



Welcome at City Park

This lovely picture shows the welcome that anyone visiting City Park received over the Christmas period. These two lovely wooden deer watched the coming and goings and brought a smile to many a face.

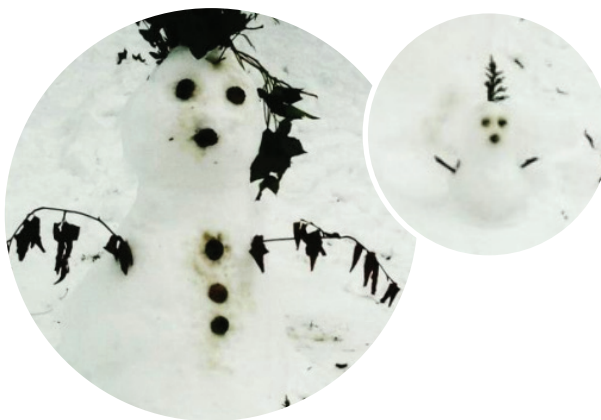




Around the Houses (continued)

Nessie – Just Chillin' at Old Farm Court with some friends

It all started with Lisa and Moussa making a funny wee snowman outside our window for her dad to see! At that time, the snow was very powdery and difficult to hold together!



The following day was much better so Norma and her daughter Sharon built this cute little fella!

Marion's son-in-law, Mustapha (who is an artist) added his sculptures to the pack and built the teddy snow chair and then Nessie.

The manual work was done by Braheem, with the work closely watched by neighbours. It brought smiles to everyone's faces.



Woodthorpe – Christmas Treats for Tenants

Tenants at Woodthorpe received a goody bag and a festive message from staff. Jackie said that she hoped that it would 'bring cheer to people as it has been a difficult year.'

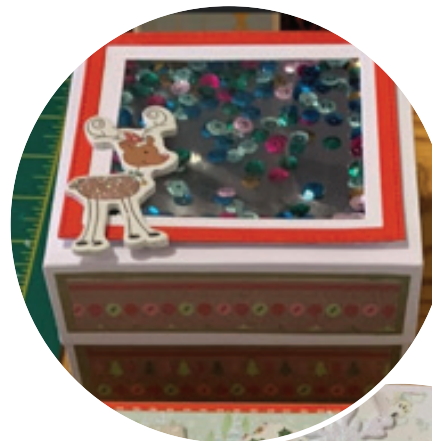
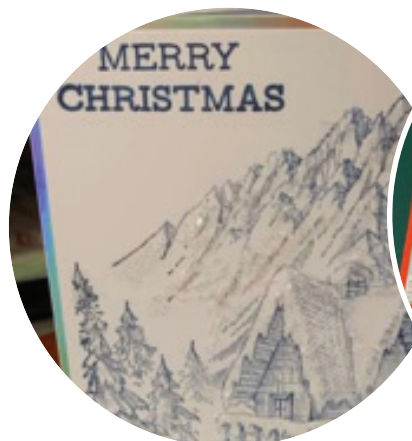


In addition, during the very heavy snowfall in February Jackie sent me a photo of a wee tree in her back garden – there is so much snow you can only see the green peeking through.



City Park Crafters Raise Money for Charities

Pam and all the other crafters at City Park made some Christmas Crafts, including boxes and card to sell at Christmas. These photographs show some of their wonderful creations. They raised the grand total of £212, which will be split between two charities: Motor Neurone Disease and Tayside Children with Cancer and Leukaemia.



Win a £25 shopping voucher

Our competition this time is on the theme of Easter. Solve the anagrams below and send to Viewpoint either by

email to tp@viewpoint.org.uk
or by post to **Viewpoint Housing Association,
4 South Oswald Road, Edinburgh, EH9 2HG**

by 30th April 2021.

Example: TEASER 6 = EASTER

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

BRENHAM SCALP (4,8)	
WHEELY OK (4,4)	
DIGGABLE HORDE (4,6,3)	
APRIL DINGHY SOS (6,8)	
SEDGY DEG (4,4)	
HEARTLESS TUPP (3,4,6)	
GORY OAF DID (4,6)	
REESTIMATE (10)	
NO RECRUITERS (12)	
ANAGRAM MEDLEY (4,9)	
COBS AUCTION HELEN (9,7)	
BAN ONE STREET (6,6)	
TEAS READY (6,3)	
SLID OFF AD (9)	
SEPARATED EAR (6,6)	
SEGREGATES (6,4)	
STERILISE ALE (6,6)	
GATHER TEE GUNS (6,3,4)	
STAY ENAMORED (6,6)	
ACCURATE SETS (6,6)	

Previous Competition Winners

Winners of our previous competitions in Newspoint are:

1. Alison from City Park has won a £25 shopping voucher for completion of the crossword in Newspoint Autumn 2020
2. Margaret from Gillespie Crescent won a £ 25 voucher for completion of the Christmas anagrams in Newspoint Winter 2020.
3. Dorothy from Lauder Road entered our Christmas photo competition with her Christmas Knitivity and has won £50 shopping voucher. They are rather cute, don't you think!

Well done to all our winners but also to all those who entered.



Christmas Knitivity - Dorothy

Interested in getting online? Then read this!

The Scottish Government have a fund called Connecting Scotland. The aim is to give people the opportunity to get on-line by providing equipment and mobile internet access.

Viewpoint have been successful in bids to connecting Scotland and have already distributed 25 iPads and Mi-Fi (mobile internet connection) to some of our tenants. Recipients have been given support to get online and to be able to use it to, contact public services, keep in contact with family and friends and to shop online.

We have recently been awarded a further 23 iPads – 3 for fife and 20 for Edinburgh.

Are you interested in getting online and receiving equipment and assistance to do so? If you are, do you meet the following criteria?

- Are you over 60 year's age, or under 60 but have a physical or mental disability?
- Are you digitally excluded at the moment as you do not have an appropriate device or are not connected to the internet at home
- Are you on a low income and cannot afford to pay for a device or for internet access?

Please phone us and let us know you are interested Tel: **0131 668 4247**

Newspoint's editorial team hope you have enjoyed reading Spring Newspoint.

What would you like to see in the next issue of Newspoint? If you have a story, or if there is something you would like to see in Newspoint you can email us at Newspoint@viewpoint.org.uk, write to us at Viewpoint Housing Association's offices or telephone

Heather (Tenant Participation and Communications Co-ordinator) on **07554 389 180**.

Editorial Team: Anne, Yvonne, Melody, Grace and Heather