

VIEWPOINT

Spring 2022

newspoint

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Important Information

Telephone

0131 668 4247

Freephone Repair Number

0800 345 7347

repair@viewpoint.org.uk
www.viewpoint.org.uk

Opening Hours

**Monday, Tuesday &
Thursday**

9am - 5pm

Wednesday

10am - 5pm

Friday

9am - 4.30pm

 @ViewpointHA

 /ViewpointHA

Welcome to your new look Spring Edition of **Newspoint**

Over the last few weeks we have worked with a graphic designer to produce a new look Newspoint.

The first thing we wanted to do was change the size of Newspoint as we received many comments that it was too big to read comfortably. Hopefully this magazine size will help.

We went further than just changing the size and Iain Morrison, the graphic designer, held two design workshops with us to find out what we liked and what we did not like.

We do hope that you like what we have come up with but if you have any suggestions about either the new look or about future content then please do let us know.

We went further than just changing the size....[we] held two design workshops to find out what we liked and what we did not like.

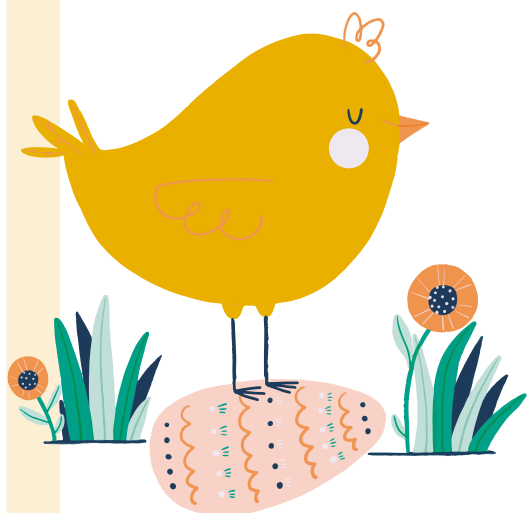
“”

Contact us through the Newspoint email address newspoint@viewpoint.org.uk or you can telephone the Viewpoint office on **0131 668 4247** and leave a message. You can also contact Heather, Tenant Participation and Communications Co-ordinator by text or by phone on **07554 389 180**.

Happy reading.

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

EASTER OPENING HOURS



Please note our offices are closed over the Easter Weekend:

- Friday 15 April 2021 and
- Monday 18 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.

Tenant Participation



What you have been doing over the last year?

With the easing of lockdown and being able to meet in person, we have been able to do more to help you get involved. So what have we been doing since April 2021?



Area Walkabouts

As you know, it is a long time since any quarterly meetings have been held. Between September and November last year, Housing Officers and Technical Officers invited tenants to attend a walkabout in their area, to highlight issues of concern. From this detailed action plans have been drawn up for each area. These should have been sent out to all tenants after the walkabout so that everyone could see what was agreed and monitor the progress. We are aware that not everyone received a copy of their local action plan and this will be rectified in the future.

The follow up walkabouts should have commenced in January 2022, however these were postponed due to COVID concerns. Letters are currently being prepared to invite you to the next walkabout in your

area, and enclosing a copy of the previous action plan. We are hoping that quarterly meetings will resume shortly, and at the end of each meeting, the Technical Officer and the Housing Officer will do a formal walkabout, which tenants will be invited to attend if they wish.

Rent and Service Charge Consultation

An information leaflet was discussed, and agreed, with a small group of tenant volunteers. This leaflet and questionnaire was sent to everyone to give opportunity to give your views on the proposal.

The outcome of this is in a separate article in the newsletter and the summary reports can be found on our website at www.viewpoint.org.uk/news/



Newspoint Editorial Team

Newspoint Editorial Team has also been very busy. Over the last year, they have been looking at developing the way they work with Viewpoint and it is a learning experience for all.

Recently we have discussed the timing of the issues, as the winter edition seems to arrive at some homes after Christmas, although it is posted in plenty of time to arrive pre-Christmas. This year the group have agreed the following posting schedule

- **Spring Edition** - posted by 25 March 2022
- **Summer Edition** - posted by 1 August 2022
- **Winter Edition** - posted by 28 November 2022

And of course they have been involved in the new look of Newspoint.

Design Group

A group of volunteers, including those who worked on the new handbook and the Newspoint editorial team have had two meetings with the graphic designer.

The group had two tasks: to revamp Newspoint and to agree a design for the new handbook.

Iain Morrison, the graphic designer, held two sessions with the group and discussed concepts – what we liked the look of and why, and what we did not like and why. Everyone involved really enjoyed seeing things progressing and looking forward to seeing the end product.

New Tenants Handbook

Over the last 18 months, we have had a group of tenant volunteers working on the new tenants' handbook. This has been a particularly arduous job as COVID meant we were unable to meet, and some of the members of the group were unable to join in online. As a result, the handbook was sent out a chapter at a time by post for review and then the full version was sent out and approved by the group in October 2021.

It was an extremely demanding task and I can only thank all those involved that we now have an agreed text.

Decant Policy and Procedure Consultation

A decant is where a tenant has to move temporarily out of their home, usually to allow major works to be done e.g. after a fire. A small group of volunteers worked with staff to develop a new policy. The decant policy was approved by the Board in August 2021. This can be found on our website at www.viewpoint.org.uk/news

A group of staff have now produced the first draft of a procedure for decanting tenants. Some tenants from the policy group had indicated that they would also like to be involved with developing the procedures. At the time of writing, a meeting has been arranged with tenant volunteers in March to review with staff.

TENANT PARTICIPATION

Allocation Policy

Our allocation policy was due for review by April 2022. Staff carried out the initial review and we asked our solicitor to check the document to ensure we were fully compliant with the law.

An online meeting was held with a small group of tenants and there was a very lively and useful discussion, which resulted in some changes being made.

The revised policy will be considered at the next Operations Committee (a sub-Committee of the Board) and, if approved, will then be posted on our website www.viewpoint.org.uk/publications

Mobility Scooter Policy

Our mobility scooter policy was reviewed and a meeting with staff was held to consider their views and recommendations and then a small working group of tenants met to discuss the new draft, some of the issues staff had raised, and to raise any issues or make recommendations of their own. This meeting was held online and was very useful in finalising the document that will be sent to the next Operations Committee. It will be posted on our website once it has been approved at www.viewpoint.org.uk/publications

The meeting with tenants highlighted that it would be good to have a tenant information leaflet to give to tenants considering the acquisition of a mobility scooter. Because of this, tenant volunteers will be meeting towards the end of March to work on this, and this will become part of the procedure. Staff are also working on the full procedure and action points to ensure that we can implement the policy.

Communications

Tenant volunteers have been involved in various communications sent out to you including correspondence regarding the Housing Support Review.

Strategic Plan Meeting

Jean Gray has arranged to meet with tenant volunteers during March to discuss Viewpoint's strategic plan. There will be an update in the summer edition of Newspoint on this.

Recruitment

Our tenant volunteers continue to be involved in the recruitment of 'front facing staff' as defined in our policy www.viewpoint.org.uk/media/4460/tenant-involvement-in-recruitment-policy.pdf

So far, volunteers have been involved in the recruitment of nine members of staff.

In addition, the recruitment volunteers were also consulted on the review of the Involving Tenants in Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy, which was approved in July 2021.

Keeping Pets Policy

All tenants were given an opportunity to give their views through a questionnaire sent in Spring 2021 edition of Newspoint. There was a tremendous response and this shaped our revised pet policy, which we reported in the last edition of Newspoint.





Registering Tenants Organisations Policy

This policy was reviewed and approved in August 2021 and tenant volunteers and our tenants groups were all asked for comment, albeit by post, as we were unable to meet in person or by Zoom at that time. www.viewpoint.org.uk/media/4442/registering-tenants-organisations-policy.pdf

Housing Support Review

Our tenants in sheltered, alarmed and retirement housing were part of the housing support review carried out last year, following Edinburgh City Council's decision to withdraw Housing Support Funding.

Tenants were involved in correspondence that was sent out, but more importantly all tenants were asked to complete a questionnaire and the response was phenomenal and has really influenced what the revised service will look like.

Tenant Performance Report

Each year we prepare a report for tenant's on Viewpoint's performance. The present layout was designed with tenant volunteers in 2019, and we have used this as a basis over the last two years, given restrictions by the COVID pandemic. In order to keep tenants involved we did send the information out for comments by post and email.

If you would like a paper copy of any of these documents please ask a member of staff.

And to all of those who took part in walkabouts, working groups or completing surveys a big thank you from Viewpoint. Your input has helped shape our services to you.

What's Next and How Can I Help?

Meetings and Walkabouts

By attending your regular meetings or walkabouts you are already playing a big part in ensuring that your home is a good place to live.

The action plans will help you know what we are going to do and enable this to be followed up on a regular basis.

We want to make these meetings as useful as possible and some ideas that have been put forward for these meetings are:

- To follow up any relevant stories from Newpoint
- To carry out some consultations or reviews at local meetings instead of relying on written questionnaires
- To invite other staff, or other organisations, to meeting to discuss specific issues, if this is required

If you have any ideas about how to make these meeting work better for you then please do not hesitate to speak to your Co-ordinator, Housing Officer or Technical Officer.

Tenant Participation Strategy Review

Our Tenant Participation Strategy is due for review this year and we are very keen to have your input to this. We do not have a definite plan of how we will do this yet. We anticipate that the initial phase will involve staff attending local meetings to get your views and feedback, prior to producing a draft strategy that can then be considered by tenant volunteers, Tenants Action Group and Fife Viewpoint Tenants Group and then going to the Board for approval.

Our existing strategy can be found at www.viewpoint.org.uk/media/4285/tp-strategy-nov-2018-updated-december-2020.pdf

TENANT PARTICIPATION



Rent Income Policy

Our rent income policy aims to minimise tenants debts and maximise timely payments of tenant related debt. In addition, it aims to produce a proactive and reasonable approach to debt management, through a person centred approach, which sustains tenancies. Our existing policy can be found at www.viewpoint.org.uk/media/2092/rent-income-policy.pdf

The policy is due for review and tenant volunteers will be invited to be part of this review.

Rent and Service Charge Consultation

The rent and service charge consultation takes place from November to January each year.

Each year the leaflet content and layout is agreed by tenant volunteers and then the questionnaire and leaflet is sent to everyone. This year we had a 21% return, however we would like to give tenants more opportunity to discuss this, in person, with staff, in addition to the questionnaire. This will be discussed with the tenant volunteers later in the year to discuss the best way to approach this, to maximise your input.

Tenant Performance Report

Volunteers will be asked if they wish to join the working group to review the performance report, which has to be completed by the end of October 2022. The group will review both content and layout. This is particularly important, as tenant involvement with this over the last two years has been very limited.

Tenant Conference

If it is safe to do so we would like to hold a tenant conference this year and we would like tenants to have input to this, whether it be ideas for activities or discussions, or in the actual planning process.

Social and Learning Opportunities

IT Skills

We will continue our partnership with Tap Into IT to ensure that all our tenants can access assistance with IT issues, whether you are a beginner, or more experienced user. There are opportunities for one-to-one support but also more social opportunities involving small groups. We are currently looking at how we make the best use of the time we have with Tap Into IT.

Remember this service is free of charge to all our tenants and you can contact Tap Into IT directly online at tapintoit.org.uk/computer-support-online/ or by telephoning 07505 555 011.

Falls Prevention

We fully understand that falling can be very frightening and lead to loss of confidence and mobility. A few tenants have asked about providing some falls prevention classes and we are currently looking into this with local services and will update you in the near future.

Newspoint

Contributions for Newspoint are always welcome, whether that be a photograph, a story, a poem or an article of interest.

We will be continuing to work with the editorial team and look at ways of ensuring that Newspoint is what tenants want and need.

If you would like to contribute to Newspoint or be part of the editorial team, speak to your Co-ordinator or Housing Officer or contact Heather, Tenant Participation and Communications Co-ordinator (see details page 9).

And there may well be other things we have not yet identified so watch this space...

What are tenant volunteers?

Tenant volunteers are frequently mentioned in this article. Tenant volunteers can be involved as much, or as little, as they wish. If we are going to consult and are not going to do this at a local level, we would call on our volunteers to see if they wished to take part.

Tenant volunteers can indicate what type of activities they wish to be involved in within these broad categories:

- **Recruitment** – being part of the recruitment panel for recruiting front facing staff
- **Communication** – comment and review specific communications, including leaflets, tenants handbook etc.
- **Performance** – look at performance within the organisation and recommend areas where more scrutiny may be required. Scrutiny groups are made up of tenant volunteers and can then make recommendations to the Board.
- **Tenants Conference** – can be involved in the planning and design of the tenants' conference
- **Newspoint Team** – this group of volunteers makes suggestions for Newspoint and approves articles.

As things arise, you will be contacted by email or letter asking if you are interested. If you are unable to take part, or not very interested in the subject matter then you just have to say not this time. This does not exclude you being asked the next time!

If I am interested in getting involved how do I do this?

You can speak to your co-ordinator, your housing officer or your technical officer who will then let the tenant participation and communications co-ordinator (TPCC) know.

Alternatively you can contact Heather (the current TPCC) directly on **0131 662 5142** or **07554 389 180** or email tp@viewpoint.org.uk

How do I submit an article for Newspoint?

You can give the article to your co-ordinator, your housing officer or your technical officer who will then pass it to the TPCC.

Alternatively you can contact Heather (the current TPCC) directly on **0131 662 5142** or **07554 389 180** or email newspoint@viewpoint.org.uk

Tenants Groups

Fife Viewpoint Tenants Group and Tenants Action Group (Lothian)

Your tenants groups are still operational. Both groups have been unable to meet due to COVID but we are anticipating that the groups will be able to restart in the coming months.

If you have any ideas about what you would like to see your group do then please let them know.

Both groups are there to represent you and if you wish to contact you can do so by email:

- Fife Viewpoint Tenants Group
- fifeviewpointTG@gmail.com
- TAG- lothiantag@gmail.com

Alternatively, you can phone and leave a message with Heather (Tenant Participation and Communications Co-ordinator) **0131 662 5142** and she will pass your name and number onto a committee member and ask them to contact you.

Both Committees are looking for additional committee members and if you are interested then please use the email addresses above or contact Heather.

Viewpoint Tenants Representative Group (VTRG) has been dissolved

The committee of the Viewpoint Tenants Representative Group met in November 2021 and decided to dissolve the organisation. This has been brought about by resignations, ill- health and lack of interest. As the group no longer exists, it is no longer a Registered Tenants Organisation.



Rent and Service Charge Changes Agreed for 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 8 February 2022, consideration was given by the Board to the responses provided to the questions asked and all other feedback received, plus other financial information provided by the Association. The proposal to apply a 2.9% increase to rent and 2% increase to most service charges was approved and this will take effect from 1 April 2022. 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.

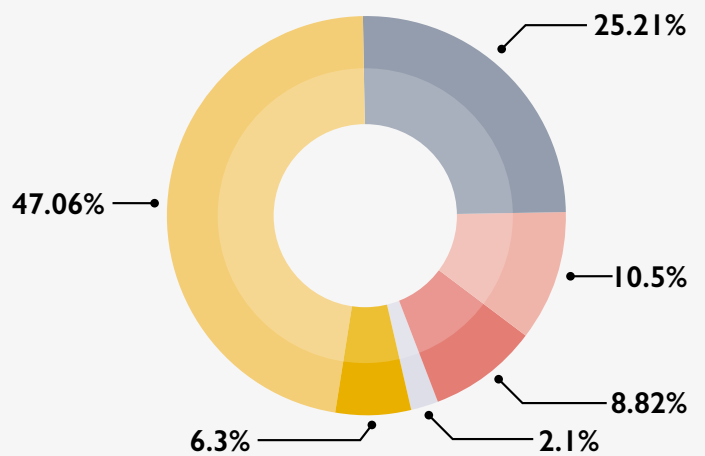
238 surveys were completed (21% return) and a full report provided to Viewpoint's Board in February. The report is available on our website and if you wish a printed copy please contact us and we will send you one.

Here is the feedback from the questions we asked.

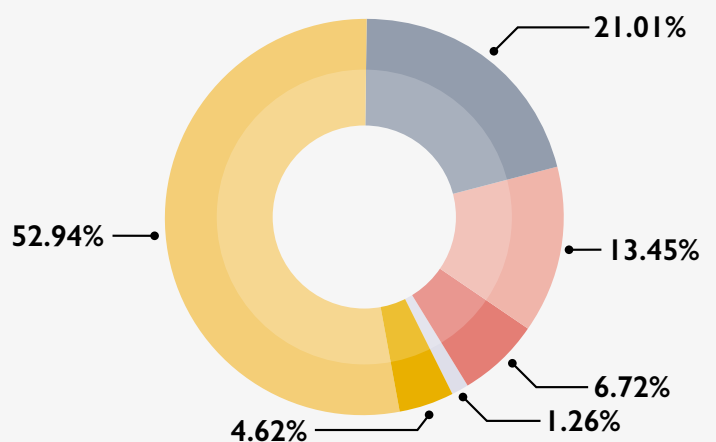
KEY:

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- No Response

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

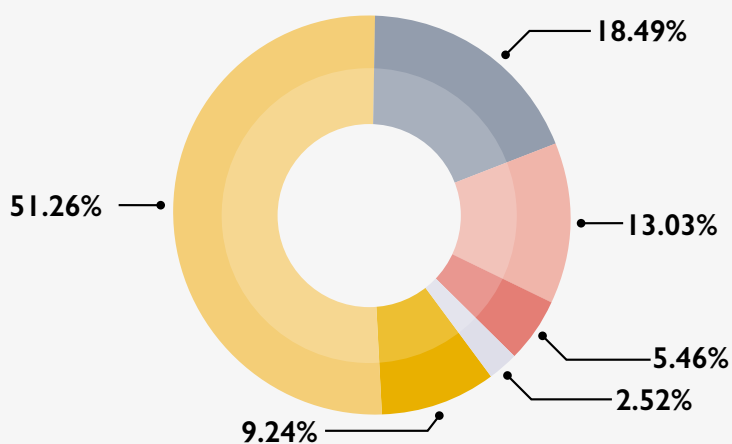


Do you feel that the service charges are fair and affordable?

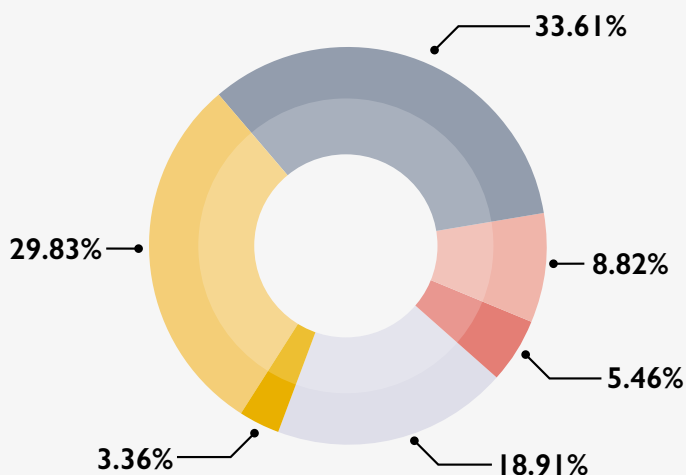


Survey 2022/2023

Do you feel you get value for money from Viewpoint?



We also asked tenants, if they pay a housing support service charge, how they feel about Viewpoint including this charge in their rent from 1 April 2023, removing it as a service charge.

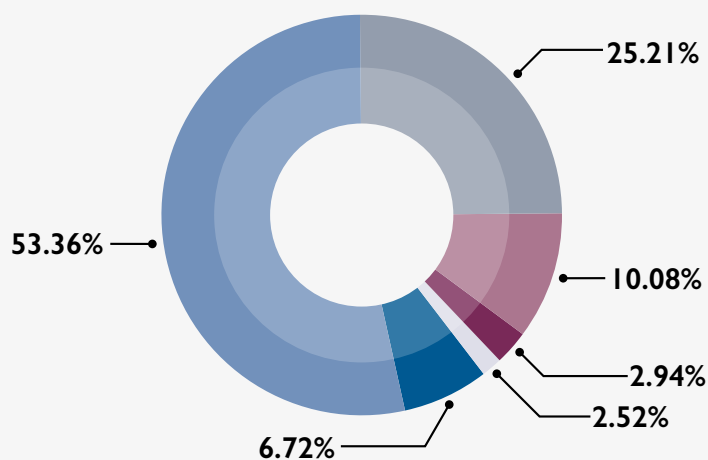


The Board agreed that the Housing Support service charge should move to the rent charge from 1 April 2023.

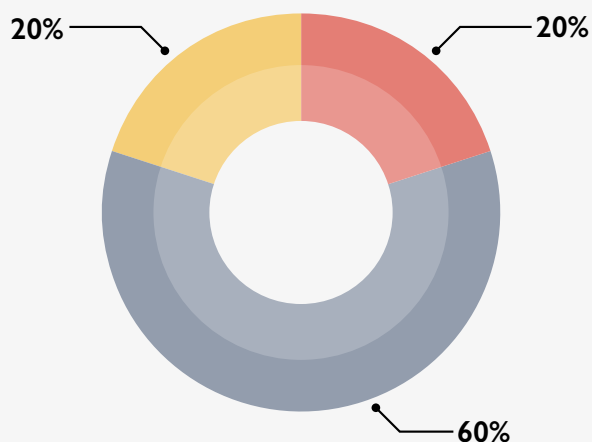
Do you feel your rent is affordable?

KEY:

- Very Affordable
- Affordable
- Neither Affordable or Unaffordable
- Unaffordable
- Very Unaffordable
- No Response



We have some tenants with different tenancy types called Loanstock Tenants. Loanstock tenants were asked their view on aligning the service charges in a similar way to other tenants.



It was agreed by the Board that the current loanstock service charges would be aligned with the service charges of our other rented properties.

“ Hi Mum, I’ve changed my phone number. You can save this number xx ”

Naomi Anderson City Park

On the face of it, this can appear to be a genuine message but if you get a message like this be very wary.



This is a screenshot of a message I received recently. I was immediately suspicious. The spelling and grammar were the first clue that something was not quite right.

The fact that I have three children but there was no indication of which child was messaging was the second red flag.

When they responded to my query with ‘your son x’ I knew it was a scam. Unknown to them my son is a cyberspace specialist with the armed forces and would never send a message like this.

I immediately blocked the number and reported it to the police. Others have been less fortunate. If they have a son or daughter who regularly loses their phone or changes provider they have been drawn in believing it to be a genuine message.

This is where things turn sinister. Once engaged in conversation the ‘son’ or ‘daughter’ explains they have run into some financial difficulties. The parent is asked if they can help by transferring money to them. Of course, it is not the person’s son or daughter sending the messages.

By the time, the person realizes they have been conned out of hundreds, if not thousands, of pounds.

The spelling and grammar were the first clue that something was not quite right.

“ ”

If you receive a message of this type there are things you can do to protect yourself and ensure that it is genuine. Ask them for information only your son or daughter would know. Better still, call them.

Call your son or daughter on the number you already have for them. If you do not get them on that number, call them on the new number. If it is genuine, they will answer, or if they are busy, they will call back. Do not transfer any money until you have spoken to your son or daughter and confirmed that it is them.

If it is genuine, your son or daughter will be glad that you are being careful and nothing is so urgent that it cannot wait an hour or two.

TV Licences Good News for Tenants in Sheltered Housing



In the winter edition of Newspoint we advised that TV licensing were withdrawing concessionary licences on many of our complexes as we did not have staff living on site.

We advised that it was likely that tenants who previously benefited from a concessionary licence and were under 75, would now have to pay for a full licence.

This is no longer the case. After much negotiation and perseverance by Morag, one of our housing advisors, we are now pleased to advise that all our sheltered housing sites will continue to be covered by a

concessionary licence, regardless of the date that you moved in.

This good news means that tenants who were on concessionary licence will continue to be on a concessionary licence at the date of renewal. It also means that some tenants who were excluded from a concessionary licence because of the date they moved into the property will now be eligible.

If you have any queries regarding this please contact the Viewpoint Housing Team on 0131 668 4247 (option 2) or email housing.info@viewpoint.org.uk

Help and Advice with Your Fuel Bills



The Scottish Government says: “a household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, total fuel costs necessary for the home are more than 10% of the household’s adjusted net income (after housing costs), and if after deducting fuel costs, benefits received for a care need or disability and childcare costs, the household’s remaining adjusted net income is insufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of living.”

It is estimated that around 619,000 households in Scotland are in fuel poverty. The people most likely to be affected are disabled people, older people, people on a low income, young families, lone parents and people with health issues.

It is no secret that fuel bills are escalating and there is a big concern that more people will fall into fuel poverty, which I am sure is a matter that concerns all of us. These pages try to bring together as much information and advice as possible.

If you need help and are unable to access any of these services, please let us know.

Who Can You Contact About Your

FOR EDINBURGH & LOTHIAN TENANTS ONLY

Affordable Warmth Team

Changeworks are Scotland's leading environmental charity delivering solutions for low carbon living and have been doing so for over 30 years.

Changeworks have an Affordable Warmth Team. Their Affordable Warmth Advisors provide free and impartial advice to householders in Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, the Scottish Borders and the Highlands, who are in or at risk of fuel poverty.

They provide advice over the telephone, by post and by email and can support people to:

- Keep their home affordably warm and dry, even if they are on a low income
- Understand their electricity, heating and/or gas bills and manage energy debt
- Know how to save energy in the home, including how to use their heating system
- Read their meters, including getting to grips with pre-payment meters
- Switch to a cheaper supplier or tariff

To contact the Affordable Warmth Team:

- Telephone **0800 870 8800**
(Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm)
- Email: warmth@changeworks.org.uk

FOR FIFE RESIDENTS ONLY

Cosy Kingdom

Cosy Kingdom is a free and impartial energy and debt advice service available to all tenants and homeowners across Fife.

It is a partnership between Greener Kirkcaldy, St Andrews Environmental Network and Citizens Advice & Rights Fife.

Their advisors can offer help by telephone and if needed, can visit you in the comfort of your own home.

Cosy Kingdom say 'Our friendly energy advisors can help you find practical and affordable ways to save energy, understand your gas and electricity bills and tariffs, switch supplier, advice on gas and electricity utility debt and help apply for the Warm Home Discount. We can also refer you for free benefit checks, offer support to those who are unable to top up their meters and provide a free handy service for those eligible for free energy saving measures.'

You can contact Cosy Kingdom by:

- Telephone: **01592 807 930**
(Monday – Friday 10am- 3pm)
- Text: 'COSY' and your name to **88440**
- Email: info@cosykingdom.org.uk
- Online: www.cosykingdom.org.uk/contact-us/

Simple Ways to Reduce your Energy Bill

- Switch off standby
- Turn off the lights when not in use
- Wash at 30 degrees
- Avoid using the tumble dryer where possible
- Reduce the amount of time you spend in the shower – 4 minutes recommended
- Don't overfill the kettle and only boil the water you need

For more quick tips visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/hub/quick-tips-to-save-energy/



Fuel Bill?

SCOTLAND WIDE

Home Energy Scotland

Home Energy Scotland are a network of local advice centres covering all of Scotland.

They are funded by the Scottish Government and managed by Energy Savings Trust.

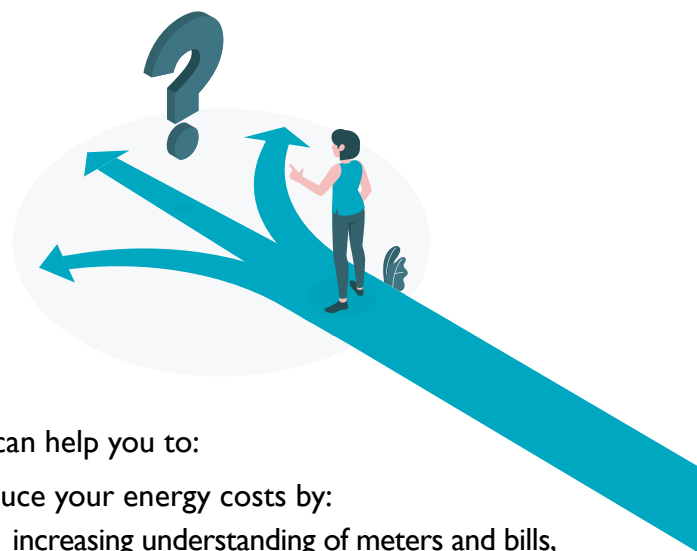
They provide free impartial advice and can be contacted on:

- Telephone: **0808 808 2282** (Freephone helpline Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm, and Saturday 9am – 5pm) (NB phones can be very busy at evenings and weekends)
- Complete the online form at: www.homeenergyscotland.org/contacting-us-someone-else/

Warmworks Scotland

Warmworks Scotland is a joint venture between Changeworks, Energy Savings Trust and Everwarm.

Warmworks Scotland delivers warmer homes Scotland, a national poverty scheme funded by the Scottish Government.



They can help you to:

- Reduce your energy costs by:
 - increasing understanding of meters and bills,
 - help you deal more efficiently with suppliers and secure the best tariffs, payment methods, discounts and additional supplier services and
 - resolve incorrect bills
- Improve energy efficiency at home by
 - providing energy efficiency tips which are tailored to your circumstances
 - explain how to get the most from your heating systems and controls,
 - advice on combatting condensation and dampness and other energy efficiency measures

The scheme aims to help vulnerable, fuel poor and lower income families by providing step-by-step advice on energy efficiency. They also support lower income families to install improvements such as better insulation or solar panels. They can be contacted by:

- Telephone - **0808 156 9568**
- Email: enquiries@warmworks.co.uk

Advice about Changing Your Supplier

Changeworks say 'You may have noticed that several energy suppliers have closed in recent weeks. As the energy price crisis continues, it may be best to stick with your current supplier, as many suppliers are not currently taking on new customers and you may not actually save anything from switching to another supplier.'

If your energy supplier closes, you do not need to do anything. You will still receive your gas and electricity as usual. Ofgem, the energy regulator, will move your account to a new supplier. They will let you know which one this is.'

Good News for Tenants with Common Heating or Common Heating and Hot Water Systems

Good news is that for those of you have communal heating or communal heating and hot water, there will be no other price increases for these services beyond that advised in your rent and service charge increase letter.

This is because the Association negotiated a contract with the supplier for a fixed rate for a period. Obviously when this is due for renewal this may change, but we will endeavour to get the best deal possible for you.

Fuel Bank Vouchers Scheme

People with low income and families that are at the crisis point struggling to provide food and/or heating can benefit from the Fuel Bank vouchers scheme.

The scheme is available for those who have prepaid meters in their houses. You can claim free vouchers with the value of £49 up to three times a year.

The Fuel Bank scheme has an easy and quick application process - anyone who wants to benefit from the programme has to get a referral for the Foodbank from an independent third party.

Foodbank is the Trussell Trust's largest project and offers the Fuel Bank programme as additional support. As the scheme aims at supporting

people in crisis, naturally, it starts at the Foodbanks.

To enter the scheme, you need to contact any service that supports people in need, such as Citizens Advice, a social worker, police or a local GP. They can then give you a Foodbank voucher.

The referral process is momentary, and once you make an application at a food bank, it takes up to 24 hours for you to receive a voucher code via text message or email.

Once you have your voucher code, head to the nearest PayPoint with your pre-payment card or key and redeem it. You can choose how to split the voucher between gas and electricity. You have 30 days to use the voucher.

Viewpoint's Welfare Right Officer

Eleanor Eccles is Viewpoint Housing's Welfare Rights Officer, she can make sure you are getting all the benefits that you are entitled to and can help you appeal if you are unhappy with a benefit decision.

Eleanor can explain your options if you have debts that you are struggling to manage or bills that you do not understand. If you have concerns over rising costs and want to ensure you are fully informed and in receipt of all you are entitled to please get in touch, Eleanor can arrange to visit you, or discuss things over the phone and ensure you can access the information you need.

You can contact Eleanor by phoning **0131 662 5144** or by emailing eleanor.eccles@viewpoint.org.uk





So who are Tap into IT?

We frequently mention Tap into IT in our newsletters but who are they?

Tap into IT have a podcast to explain all about how they started and what they can do. Fine if you have a computer and know how to use it and I would urge you to have a listen. However, for those of you without a computer or know how to access the podcast here is a condensed transcript prepared by Tap into IT.

Tap into IT is a social enterprise enabling the digital participation of older people living in Edinburgh. During the summer of 2021, Lesley Scarles Digital Support Worker, talked to some of the people involved in Tap into IT's partnership with Viewpoint Housing Association, the largest provider of sheltered housing for older people in the Edinburgh area.

She asked about the partnership's origins, how it adapted during the COVID 19 pandemic and how Viewpoint tenants have benefited from going online.

Mike Ellis, Executive Director of Tap into IT set up Tap into IT as a social enterprise in 2012. His background was 27 years in social care and social work. He knew there were a tremendous amount of people who were offline and one of the best routes to them would be social housing. He was given the chance by Viewpoint Housing Association to do a three-month pilot project at Gillespie Crescent in Tollcross.



SO WHO ARE TAP INTO IT?

...all the little niggles, email, downloading stuff, it taught me how to do these kinds of things.

“”

Helen Barclay was the Housing and Property Director at Viewpoint Housing Association in Edinburgh. She describes how Tap into IT groups went on to be set up in specific sheltered complexes in the communal lounges.



Jacqueline Loose, a Viewpoint tenant had never been given opportunity until then so responded immediately to the notice that came round asking if anyone wanted to “learn the computer.” She has found it ‘really good, so interesting and it’s definitely worth going.’



Sheona Hall, Volunteer and a Trustee with Tap into IT is a retired teacher, Support for learning facilitator and teacher trainer. She describes how there were just 3 or 4 people at the first session she helped at...The group she is involved in has expanded over the past 10 years to about 20 people some days with a corresponding increase in volunteers. Most of it was by word of mouth and extended to people outwith Viewpoint Housing.



Paul Sinclair is one such tenant who heard about the club he goes to through talking to somebody at Viewpoint. He describes how it has helped him with “all the little niggles, email, downloading stuff, it taught me how to do these kinds of things.” He appreciates the “socialisation aspect of it. He has made quite a few friends” through it.



Heather Jeffrie, the Tenant Participation and Communications Coordinator with Viewpoint Housing Association started with Viewpoint Housing Association in October 2019.



She describes how, “just before lockdown, we had been talking with Tap into IT about how to reach more of our tenants then COVID came along! Tap into IT adapted their services very quickly in a very positive way, so that we were still able to offer our tenants that one-to-one support to get online and to do things that they might not have had to do prior to COVID. So that was very helpful.”

Mike Ellis recounts the switch to small online group during lockdown of about 3 people per group with a couple of helpers per group. He says (the COVID situation) ...has actually done us a favour in making people realise just how essential now being online is for communication, keeping in touch with family and day to day stuff – shopping, entertainment, finding out what is happening ...The COVID situation has meant that so much more is being done online on a routine basis too. To my mind we need to offer access to everyone regardless of abilities or disabilities...”

It doesn’t matter what goes wrong with your iPad or computer, they know how to sort it. It’s just amazing.

“”

Viewpoint tenant Margaret Simpson says what happens at her online group. “We meet (online) every Tuesday afternoon for an hour. We have a hostess, Sheona, and we chat for the first 20 minutes or so and we then we play games. If we have any problems with our technology we can ask ... It doesn’t matter what goes wrong with your iPad or computer, they know how to sort it. It’s just amazing. I have recommended our zoom meetings. Online shopping is a life saver as well.”



Volunteer Sheona Hall gives her view on how being online has helped TapIT group members, helping them do more for themselves rather than having to rely on others, and “seeing more of family because they have family who live far away and they are now connecting with them more through technology.” She stresses that the groups help members as much through the social contact as the technical help they get. “As a charity we are trying to reach out to those that are digitally excluded and socially isolated.”

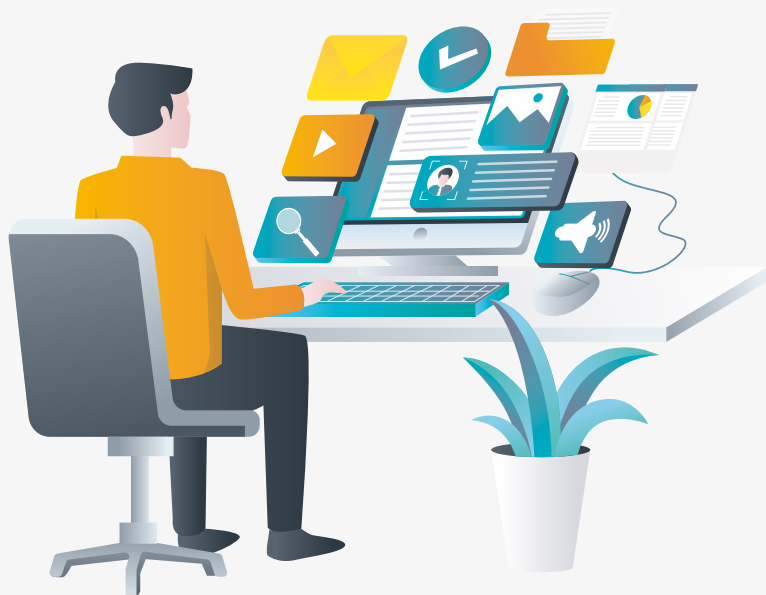
Heather Jeffrie adds: “I think Tap into IT were very responsive; I don’t think that teaching somebody IT over a phone is easy and I really do admire Tap into IT for how they have managed because there has been a very positive response from our tenants about this.” After listing some of the benefits to tenants, she gives the example of some who, after Tap Into IT had shown them how to use Zoom (-though initially resistant to it), came onto a meeting with her and soon started talking to each other then went on to join online history clubs and all sorts of things. “So that was really, really positive.”

Looking ahead to the development of similar partnerships between social enterprise organisations and housing associations.

Mike Ellis reckons that the partnership approach with Housing Associations is key. “Having a contact person within the organisation who really sees the benefit of getting residents/tenants online ... and is actively working with us to enable that to happen.” He regards digital support as an essential part of health and social care support now ... “Why bother?” with this age group? He says it’s not just out of respect and valuing them but for the benefit of the people around them too. “We need each other and if you have got folk who are missing out of the community, then we all miss out.”

Sheona Hall thinks that connecting people helps them stay healthy. Also there are so many things now that can only be done online so people can become quite excluded otherwise. She thinks Tap into IT can work with Housing Associations and organisations to this end.

Heather Jeffrie agrees that we’re “into a very digital society so it’s important that tenants can keep up with that and not end up excluded from society” and thinks that Housing Associations recognise that, especially since COVID. She is aware this may change as the next generation of tenants are more digitally aware, “but at the moment a lot of the clients are not so it’s quite important to get them there.”



SO WHO ARE TAP INTO IT?

She describes the benefits of working with Tap into IT. “The reality is that if you are working in a job as a Housing Officer, for example, you don’t necessarily have the time to spend with somebody to help them get online and access everything they want. ... Tap into IT offer that service and ... expertise and ... that personal service..- they don’t just leave somebody to sort it out for themselves, they will actually guide them and show them and follow up.”

Helen Barclay is now on Tap into IT’s strategy group. She says that at the time of leaving Viewpoint, changes were already happening to Health and Wellbeing services, e.g. access to GP’s through video conferencing, which have increased due to the COVID pandemic. She thinks it is important that digital inclusion/participation is included in Housing Association Health and Well-being, Tenant Participation, Communications and IT strategies. She also went on to give examples of the difference it can make to tenants e.g. those returning from hospital and having to adapt to a different lifestyle as they can no longer get out, stopping them getting so depressed. Helping people with Dementia to remain mentally active.

The final words go to Viewpoint tenants Margaret, Jacqueline and Paul founder Tap into IT members:

(Margaret). It’s a huge thing going from not having any knowledge of computers or iPads to go on to tackling it; you feel very much at a disadvantage because we were never brought up with computers. ... I’ve definitely benefited from being online; you can

...you can only tell people what a difference it makes to your life. Especially when you are older and on your own such a lot. I’m on Zoom quite often with my family...

“”

only tell people what a difference it makes to your life. Especially when you are older and on your own such a lot. I’m on Zoom quite often with my family, up north, three times a week as well as the computer club, once a week. ... (I have) four sisters... none of us felt isolated as we knew that we were just a Zoom away. That was it. It was great.”

(Jacqueline). “If I hadn’t had this (iPad), I don’t think I would have been so happy today. It has kept me going ... and I wouldn’t have managed all this time on my own here without it. I didn’t see my family very much because they are all out of town... So I really appreciate getting taught how to do this.”

(Paul). I think at the end of the day it is word of mouth. It’s individuals meeting individuals and I think that’s the best way ... Viewpoint has to be congratulated on having this facility available to their tenants.”

So if you want to get some help on line then please contact Tap into IT. Remember this service is free of charge to all our tenants and you can contact Tap into IT directly online at

[https://tapintoit.org.uk/
computer-support-online/](https://tapintoit.org.uk/computer-support-online/)

or by telephoning

07505 555 011

Staffing Update



Mike Gibson, Head of Finance left Viewpoint in January 2022 to work with a charity NIRAS-LTS. Mike is an extremely dedicated and enthusiastic Hibs supporter as can be seen in the photograph taken on the day he left Viewpoint.



Helen McMorran, Director of Business support left Viewpoint in December 2021 to work with the Scottish Forestry as Head of Operations Support and Innovation – a new and challenging role, which I am sure she will enjoy.

John Rankin, Head of Business Support, left Viewpoint in December 2021 to take up the appointment of Chief Executive at Lister Housing Co-operative

Anne McCarry, Head of Housing Support also left Viewpoint in December 2021 to be Head of Operations at a charity called 'With YOU'. With You provides service to Edinburgh and the wider area, specialising in supporting those with learning disabilities, autism, and poor mental health; those facing homelessness and people of all ages.



We wish them all the very best in their new roles.

Because of this, we have had to make some temporary appointments to fill these pivotal roles and ensure that services continue to be provided for you.

David Aitken, who was the Finance Team Leader, is temporarily covering the Head of Finance post. David has recently obtained his membership to the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, and can be seen in the photo, proudly displaying his certificate. Well done David.



Mariola Kopa, a member of the finance team, will be temporarily covering David's role as Finance Team Leader.

John Bain has been temporarily appointed as the Director of Business Support and will assist in any future recruitment related to the team. John comes with a wealth of experience in this particular area and with a specialism in HR. His most recent role was Director of Resources, which he held for 16 years, which had the same responsibilities as this post.

You will also be aware that the Housing Support Review has been completed and as a result, the team has been restructured. A leaflet has been prepared to show the new structure and to show the team of staff that are responsible for assisting you in helping you to sustain your tenancy.

Front Page Personality

97 years young Mrs Hilda Miller, who has been a resident at Croft-an-Righ for 30 years, and here is her interesting story.



Hilda was born on 12 June 1924 at 5 Gayfield Street, Edinburgh, and she attended London Street Primary School until 1935, then went on to take a Commercial Course at Bellevue Secondary School, which she completed in February 1939.

This led to a versatile experience of working, not only as a Secretary, but of also organising inter-departmental affairs throughout eight firms until she reached the peak of her career in March 1973, when she became Supervisor of the Central Typing Services for the newly formed Housing Department of Edinburgh Council. Not only did she build up this new department, but also she organised the social activities such as Keep fit, Swimming, Bowling and Putting.

In December 1947, Hilda was married to Robert McCoy and during the early days, she was involved in social activities with the Ladies Auxiliary of the Y.M.C.A. where Bob played badminton, and both played badminton for the Pleasance Club, Amateur Dramatic Club at Broughton Place Church. President of the Women's Guild, Typist to Session Clerk and Roll-keeper, Coordinator of Supplement Teams and became an Elder in 1982, and always

a keen theatregoer, ballroom dancer, Scottish country dancer, dressmaker, did embroidery and crochet and while with the Housing Department took up bowling and carpet bowling in the Church

Centre. When Bob sang with the Concert Parties and Choirs, she went along, recited poetry, and was known to write poetry for special occasions.



After retiring in June 1984, she became a Relief Warden with Castlerock Housing Association in their newly built complex at Norton Park, the site where Edinburgh Crystal Works now stands in Penicuik. She held this position for eight and a half happy and satisfying years, living in a house where husband Bob had worked for most of his life.

When husband Robert (The Real McCoy) passed in September 2002, Hilda continued using her organising skills with more vigour at Unison Retired and Croft-an-Righ and specialised in playing Indoor Bowls.

Spare time was used to take short breaks and holidays in the company of her sister Betty and attending occasional Tea and Evening Dances.

In the spring of 2007, Hilda met James Allan Miller while on a holiday with Betty in Scarborough and married in December 2008, when she was sweet 84! They continued to live at Croft-an-Righ, having moved into a larger flat, and they enjoyed regular holidays in Scotland, cruised in the Caribbean, Norway, the Outer Hebrides, Jersey and finally to Austria in 2011, after which Allan suffered TIAs resulting in a short time in St Raphael's Care Home prior to his passing in January 2014.

Hilda served as Secretary to the Croft-an-Righ Social Club for 15 years and is still a lively member of most of the activities now taking place. When she took over as Secretary, she started an Album of Activities and discovered that there was only a small photo of the Duke of Edinburgh to show that he had opened the complex, so Hilda wrote to Buckingham Palace in 2007 extending an invitation to the Duke to revisit Croft-an-Righ. Eventually a reply came to confirm

It would have been fun to see the gleam in the Duke's eye when he told the Queen about having been in the bedroom of her next-door neighbour!

“ ”

that Prince Philip would be in residence at Holyrood Palace for the Royal Week in July and would pay a visit. On the chosen day, the Duke walked over from the Palace, accompanied by his Secretary and two Security Officers.

It transpired that there were still ten minutes left of the 30-minute visit, so Hilda asked HRH if he would like to see inside one of the flats, and he agreed, so they called in at Block 10 where Hilda's flat was located, and she showed him round her flat. It was only when they had reached her bedroom that Hilda realised that the followers had remained outside the building. They quickly retraced their steps and bid farewell at the gate, where his limousine was waiting to take him to his next appointment. It would have been fun to see the gleam in the Duke's eye when he told the Queen about having been in the bedroom of her next-door neighbour!

The Computer Swallowed Grandma By Valerie Waite

*The computer swallowed grandma.
Yes, honestly its true!
She pressed 'control' and 'enter'
And disappeared from view.*

*It devoured her completely,
The thought just makes me squirm.
She must have caught a virus
Or been eaten by a worm.*

*I've searched through the recycle bin
And files of every kind;
I've even used the Internet,
But nothing did I find.*

*In desperation, I asked Jeeves
My searches to refine.
The reply from him was negative,
Not a thing was found 'online.'*

*So, if inside your 'Inbox,'
My Grandma you should see,
Please 'Copy,' 'Scan' and 'Paste' her
In an email back to me.*



~ © 2004 Valerie Waite ~ "The poem was originally written by me for the children's page of a local magazine in July 2004 and it was published in the 'Daily Mail' English national newspaper (Peterborough page) on July 2nd 2004 (together with my name and address.) Since then the poem has appeared all over the world, either as 'author unknown', or 'unknown' or even 'newspaper'; occasionally it does include my name. It is featured in my second book of illustrated poems 'Little Gems' published solely to raise funds for the Sight Saver Appeal at the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary. It has also been set to music by Eileen Lowry of Bristol and now appears (with our permission) as a free e.card. I am so pleased that 'Grandma' seems to be amusing so many people, and hope she will continue so to do, but the last two lines of [most] version[s] are incorrect and should read 'please scan, copy and paste her in an e.mail back to me.' The poem is included in the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art Verse and Prose Anthology (with my permission) and was recently used in the Mansfield and District Arts Festival."

Around the Houses

AUTUMN 2021 Step Count Challenge

Twenty members of Viewpoint staff took part in the Autumn Step count Challenge.

Four Teams of five people logged every step they took over a four-week period.

The challenge takes place twice per year with the aim of getting people out of their car or their armchair and walking more. It seemed to work, as during the four weeks the four teams walked 5,053,474 steps. Well done to everyone who took part.

Special congratulations to the Marian Stars, who walked 1,626,777 steps and came 120th overall in the national step count challenge.



Choose a challenge		Or
The Autumn Step Count Challenge 2021	Viewpoint Hearing Associa	Search

+ Leaderboard		
120th	Marian stars * Viewpoint Hearing Association	1,626,777 Steps
219th	The Best Viewpoint Team Viewpoint Hearing Association	1,307,360 Steps
315th	Viewpoint Victors Viewpoint Hearing Association	1,067,926 Steps
324th	Step To It Viewpoint Hearing Association	1,051,411 Steps

Welcome Back Tea Party

Danny Rankin Buchan Gardens

As our hall was declared open again, our Tenants Group decided to have a 'Welcome Back' tea party. Our hall was decorated with Christmas decorations once again after a long lock down.

As storm BARRA was blowing at the time, only a few tenants braved the weather. It was nice to have a wee get together again and it gave a chance for some of our new tenants to meet each other. Tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits were on hand with easy listening music



playing in the background. A few hours were spent catching up on everyone's news and gossip.

We hope this will be the start of more events planned for our hall in the New Year.



Croft-an-Righ Activities

Grace Machirant

In November 2021, residents at Croft-an-Righ were happy to see the activities begin to appear again but unfortunately all had to be suspended due to the surge of Omicron.

However as the lounges were reopened in January the activities are back in full swing, with

- Tuesday Coffee Mornings in the Sun Lounge,
- Monthly visits from the Mobile Library,
- Pool three times a week,
- Bingo on Thursday afternoons,
- Morning Chair Exercises,
- A Music and Songsong afternoon,
- Carpet Bowls twice a week and
- A multi denomination Church Service on the second Sunday of the month.

It does make a great difference to meet fellow residents for an afternoon chat in the lounge and now we hope to go forward and find a solution to have the Croft-an-Righ Café reopened in the not too distant future.



Donation to Christmas Shoe Box Appeal

As you know from our Autumn edition of Newpoint, Marion from Old Farm Court won £100 for the charity of her choice in the Joy in Later Years Competition.

Marion's church, in Slateford Longstone, organised a successful Christmas Shoebox appeal. They managed to fill and ship a staggering 520 boxes to Kosovo in November 2021. Marion said that 'A Team of six have been working like Trojans these past few weeks, but we have received so much help from people all over the place, with donations of items for the boxes and also very generous gifting of money for the postage. We are so grateful'.

As this is a project close to Marion's heart she gave the £100 to the church which will be used towards the postage – a very worthwhile project I'm sure you will agree.



City Park Raise £700 for Charity

City Park raised £700 for charity through their Craft Sales. The craft ladies (left – right: Mary Tattersall; Helen McKenzie; Pam Gillis) handed over £350 to the manager of Tayside Children with Cancer and Leukemia, Liz Logan.

A similar cheque was also handed over to Motor Neurone disease.

Well done everyone.

Donations to Foodbank

Christine Docherty once again sent out a plea for donations and on Thursday 16 December, along with Co-ordinator Michele, set off on her journey to pick up all your donations and deliver them. Here is what Christine told us:

'Well the run was done today for the donations deposited to the foodbank. Massive, massive thanks for tenants and staff's donations. Overwhelmed with the generosity from everyone. So much so we did one run to the Trussell Trust as the van was packed with goodies an hour after we started.

Due to the generosity of you all, Trussell Trust (Birdiehouse) requested that we donate to a foodbank warehouse at Sighthill, Edinburgh Food Project. So, off we went on our travels, with our trusty Google maps....

Both projects were so overwhelmed with our donations, which were significantly more than in 2019, and that was going some!

Michele was a great help even though I got us lost at one point and we ended up on the M8 heading to the west. Don't ask! For those of you who know me, well its just another page in the Docherty alternative routes book of life.'



Christmas Decorations at Maidencraig

Shirley MacPherson

Co-ordinator

Christine, a tenant at Maidencraig Crescent, spent hours carefully putting up some really lovely decorations for everyone to enjoy.

Everyone here really appreciated them as it gave the place a lovely happy magical atmosphere and really added to everyone's Christmas.

A huge thank you is due to Christine for all of her kindness and hard work.



Getting Ready for Christmas

James Robbie from Old Farm Court decorated the tree at Old Farm Court – and a jolly good job he did too.



Christmas Jumper Day at City Park

I thought you might enjoy this photo of some of the tenants at City Park taken on Christmas jumper day.

We all enjoyed a game of Christmas bingo, and I do mean enjoyed, there was much hilarity.

In the end both the line and the full house were won by Pam (not in photo) which was very fitting as Pam this year has raised £600 through her craft sales for motor neurone disease and TCCL, a children's cancer respite charity.



Haugh Park Raise Money for MacMillan Cancer

Throughout lockdown Ann (Co-ordinator at Haugh Park) has continued to provide the tenants at Haugh Park with a monthly goodie box of home baking in lieu of their regular coffee morning.

The 20th December saw the tenants receive their Christmas box of goodies, once again lovingly baked by Ann. £190 was raised for MacMillan Cancer – a great cause – and, as always, the cakes look really tasty.





Christmas Decorations at Buchan Gardens

Danny Rankin Buchan Gardens

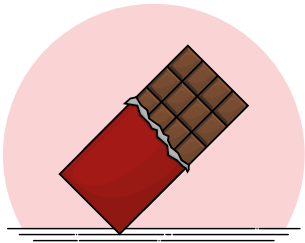
Last year Christmas was all but cancelled for Buchan Gardens as far as decorations were concerned.

We were lucky this year that our communal hall was opened for us. This allowed our committee, Wilma, Jennifer and Danny, to put up our trees and some decorations. Our patio door was once again decorated with a snow scene using 'spray' snow. This shows up really well at night when the outside light shines through.

Although we were not able to have a Christmas Party at least some cheer was given to our residents with the decorations. Hopefully next year we will all get back to some sort of normality.



The BIG Chocolate Quiz



Your chance to win a £25 gift card that can be used in various shops in store or online.

So you think you know about chocolate. I have pulled this quiz together using online ideas but also from extensive research – and it was delicious.....

Just answer the following questions, add your name and address and send it to me, Heather Jeffrie, at 4 South Oswald Road, Edinburgh EH9 2HG, by email to newspoint@viewpoint.org.uk or by text to 07554 389 180.

Fill in your details here:

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

One point for each correct answer. The entry with the highest points will win the voucher. If there is a tie then the winner will be drawn from a hat.

Guess the chocolate from their advertising slogan

'Have a break, have a ...'

'Work, Rest and Play'

'You're not you when you're hungry'

'The lighter way to enjoy chocolate'

'Chew it over with ...'

Answer True or False

Kinder eggs are banned in the USA

M&M's were invented during WWII

On average, people in the UK eat 5kg of chocolate every year

Dark chocolate is the most popular type of chocolate

Nutella was invented in Belgium

Guess the names of the following chocolate bars from the clues given. E.g. Dairy Holder = Milk Tray

Talking quietly

High class thoroughfare

Feline equipment

Garden flowers

Dating agencies

Guess the following chocolate bars from the picture







