

VIEWPOINT

Spring 2023

newspoint



Rent and service charges agreed for 2023-2024

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Important Information

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 @ViewpointHA

 /ViewpointHA

Opening Hours

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday
9am - 5pm

Wednesday
10am - 5pm

Friday
9am - 4.30pm

Easter Opening Hours

Our offices at 4 South Oswald Road will be closed on Friday 7th April and Monday 10th April 2023.

In an emergency please use our out of hours emergency number 0345 604 4686. Please note that our Coordinators will still be on site on those days.

Our out of hours emergency support service can be contacted on 0345 604 4686

Welcome to your Spring Edition of Newspoint



Don't you just love the Spring, Lighter longer days and spring bulbs popping up all over the place. Shaking off that cold winter feeling and looking forward to summer. This winter has not been a bad one but there has been some snow and ice making it difficult for us to get out and about.

We have lots of photos and stories about what you have been getting up to: Halloween Parties, Christmas Parties and Burn's nights. The photos speak for themselves that you all had a great time.

This edition sees a short story from Valerie, one of our tenants. Valerie attends a writing group and they

are given some words that they then have to create a story from. Valerie has written a great story with an unexpected ending. We do hope you enjoy it.

If you have any ideas for Newspoint, or want to make a contribution then just speak to any member of staff, email newspoint@viewpoint.org.uk or telephone Heather on 0131 662 5142.

Happy Reading.

Yvonne, Melody, Grace, Alison and Heather

Tap Into IT Online Advent Calendar

Hopefully you had the chance to take part in Tap Into IT's online advent calendar this year. There were some really good competitions and we were delighted to be able to offer some shopping vouchers as prizes.

We are delighted to be able to announce the winners of the Viewpoint shopping vouchers:

- Phyllis from Lynedoch won for her selfie of her wearing her Christmas attire
- Susan from Croft-an-Righ completed the jigsaw and
- Lynda from Croft-an-Righ sent Tap Into IT an ecard

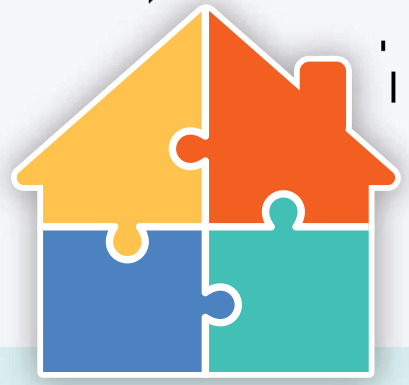
Congratulations to the winners and well done to all those who took part and honed their IT skills at the same time.



Viewpoint

A History Part 2

'Women in the Kitchen don't always agree'



In our Winter edition we explained where Viewpoint had started in 1947 and that by 1948 they had three properties – Anne House, Bridget House and Charlotte House.

All these properties provided accommodation for single women and had shared kitchen and bathroom facilities, although each person had their own room. Viewpoint was up and running but it was not without controversy. A local Edinburgh Councillor, Mrs Muir, wrote to the Scotsman newspaper in 1951 referring to housing societies that served only one section of society and that Viewpoint were operating 'with selfish ends.

This prompted a reply from the secretary of the National Federation of Housing Societies, George Bain, who said that confining efforts 'to specified special categories' such as housing and care of older people, industrial workers or single workers was acceptable within current Government policy.

Miss Cunningham (the founder of Viewpoint) also wrote a letter adding to the debate and dismissing the notion that specialised housing societies are working for selfish ends 'seeing that every effort to reduce the housing problem in some section aids in diminishing the whole'

Back closer to home, Viewpoint faced many problems in the early years with the common living arrangements, especially shared kitchens. The Evening News reported that:

'The truth of the belief that women find it difficult amicably to share a kitchen is one of the lessons learned by the housing manager of the Viewpoint Housing Society in the course of running their first four houses for single women in Edinburgh.'

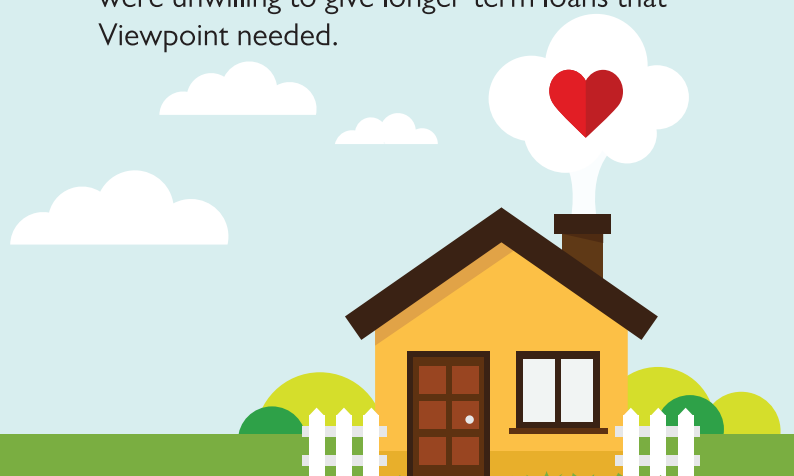
Miss Ingham, who was the secretary of Viewpoint, recalled vividly the situation that developed at Anne House.

'We had great faith in the reasonableness of human beings but this faith was nearly shattered. It should have been possible to arrange a rota for the use of the kitchen, but what really operated was the law of the jungle. Pans and kettles were snatched off stoves, washing pulled off the pulleys (and) lawyers' letters began to fly back and forth, as tenants fell out with each other. The lonely haunted the kitchen in search of company, deputations would descend upon the poor secretary in the office, accusing each other of mild, ridiculous, domestic demeanours. We felt as if the war had finished up in our house'

Viewpoint was going to have to reconsider the accommodation they provided but could they afford to?

In 1953, Viewpoint applied for charitable status due to concern about increased tax payments as mortgages on the properties diminished. However, as the Government relaxed the restrictions on improvement grants it meant that Viewpoint could consider providing homes with their own facilities.

In order to build new houses, housing legislation allowed grants for up to 80% of the cost, but the remaining 20% had to be provided by the builder. This was going to prove impossible to do as lenders were unwilling to give longer-term loans that Viewpoint needed.



Some of our Early Developments Today

Miss Ingham came to the rescue when she read the relevant legislation and realised that the Local Authority could actually make long-term investments in approved projects. Viewpoint worked hard to get that approval and to obtain these longer-term loans to cover the remaining 20% of the costs and reported in their Minutes in June 1954 that they (Viewpoint) were the 'only people in the country who made use of the facilities offered by the Housing Act'.

In 1953, Viewpoint acquired three sites for development at Newbattle Terrace, Findhorn Place and Chalmers Crescent. In addition to new build, they also continued to convert older properties. One of the plans was the creation of a home for older people and 12 Ettrick Road was purchased in 1956, converted to seven flats and opened in 1959.

There was also some new build at Cluny Gardens in the late 1950s opposite the gates leading to Blackford Pond. The landowner would only grant permission if the properties were built as semi-detached two story buildings.

Viewpoint also recognised the need for housing closer to the city centre to allow single women to travel easier to and from work. This resulted in Melgund Terrace and East Claremont Street development. The properties had been compulsory purchased by the Corporation and passed to Viewpoint to develop housing for single people.

So, what was happening to Viewpoint as they went into the 1960s? Find out in the next edition of Newpoint.



Chalmers Crescent



Cluny Gardens



Ettrick Road



Findhorn Place



Melgund Terrace and East Claremont Street

Changes in Staff over the Last 9 Months



Fiona Campbell **Coordinator at Kilravock House**

My name is Fiona Campbell, I am 26 years old and I am from West Lothian.

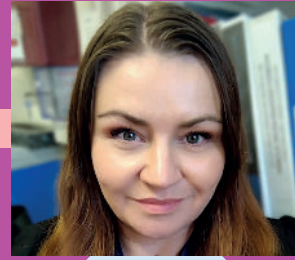
I have worked in Health and Social care since I left high school. I have worked in many areas of care from working in Care Homes, Community Home Care, Enhanced and Supported Sheltered Housing.

I worked for Trust Housing Association for 6 years and loved my job but knew it was time for a change. I started with Viewpoint in June 2022 and have been made to feel very welcome by all staff and my wonderful tenants here at Kilravock House.

I have a very busy life as I am a Mum to a wonderful but crazy little girl Isla who turned 3 in September. I live at home with my fiancé Kieren and we are getting married in November 2024 (EXCITING!) and we have 2 cats Joey and Josh who are Isla's best friends.

Fun Fact

I worked at a Girl Scout Camp in Idaho, U.S.A as a Camp Councillor for Camp America in 2015 for the Summer. I worked with young girls from ages 4 – 16 and it was one of the most rewarding jobs I have done!



Kasia Murthy **Coordinator Haugh Park**

Hello, my name is Kasia and I am a new Sheltered Housing Coordinator at Haugh Park.

Before this I worked as: Carer - Viewpoint Housing Association, Clinical Support Worker – NHS, Senior Care Worker - Meallmore Ltd, Care Coordinator - Eidyn Care Ltd, Business Administrator - Meallmore Ltd (most recent job)

I came from Poland in 2006. I am married to a man called Raj and we have 3 children (Jakub, Samuel and Samantha), 2 dogs (Argo the Black Labrador and Ozzy the Cavapoo) and 1 hamster called Pumpkin because his fur is ginger and we bought him on Halloween.

Fun Fact 1

I lived in Hamburg, Germany for 4 years and used to be fluent in German as well as Russian (unfortunately I can't remember much anymore).

Fun Fact 2

I hold a Degree in Tourism and Recreation (Management) and have to tell you that tourists are the grumpiest and most difficult to satisfy bunch (not all) therefore, I have decided to leave the sector and change my qualification.

I have completed SVQ3 in Health and Social Care, PDA Supervision in Health and Social Care, Chartered Institute of Housing Level 2 in Housing Practice and Business Administration Level 2 (kept myself busy over Pandemic)

I like music, sailing (something I used to do but haven't done for many years), long walks, food (don't like cooking but like baking) and sweets (bad habit).

Fun Fact 3— I have been a finalist in Meallmore Great Bake off – staff category.



Meet Our Housing Advisor Team

Our Housing Advisor Team is responsible for providing an efficient and effective front-line service, delivering high quality housing management services to you, our tenants.

We aim to ensure that all our tenants' needs are met to the fullest capacity from the start to the end of each tenancy. We provide support to your housing officer and work closely with your technical officer. We will assist with the smooth running of your site and help with any questions that you have.

Some of the things we do:

- Provide general housing advice to tenants and stakeholders.
- Signposting to other services within and out with Viewpoint
- Administrative assistance for tenants, Housing, Accounts, Welfare & Benefits and Tenant Participation Teams.
- Prepare documents for signing up and terminating tenancies, ensure all data is processed and passed onto the relevant departments within time frames.
- Assist in all aspects of tenancy management including rent enquiries and voids.
- Advertising, allocation and organisation of new tenancies and exchanges.



Sharri Bishop – Senior Housing Advisor

I have been working with Viewpoint for just over a year now. My role initially was a mobile Coordinator, which gave me the opportunity to visit most sites and meet with you, truly welcoming tenants.

In May 2022, I was given the fantastic opportunity to be the permanent Coordinator of Woodthorpe. I took on this role with joy and enthusiasm. It gave me the chance to really get to know my site and to build relationships with my tenants on a closer I-I basis. I think you at Woodthorpe felt the same.

I have since moved to my current role within Viewpoint as a senior housing advisor. Within this role, I am still working closely with all Viewpoint tenants. I have a new team within head office to work with. They are Margot and Tiffany. A little bit about them is here too.

Fun Fact: I love to cook. I often eat out then replicate the recipe for my family to try, without poisoning them. I also have webbed toes.



Margot Lord – Housing Advisor

I previously worked in health and social care before changing direction slightly to work in housing. I completed my Masters degree in Housing at Stirling University on a full time basis before working for social housing organisations in Edinburgh and East Lothian. I joined the Viewpoint team as Housing Advisor in August last year and am enjoying the challenges that the job brings.

Fun Fact: I try to walk to the top of Blackford Hill every lunch break. I even tried to do this during the icy weather in January but this is not to be recommended, as it was very slippery.



Tiffany Wong – Housing Advisor

I was born in Hong Kong and came to Edinburgh to finish studying Marketing at Napier University. I did go back to Hong Kong after finishing my studies but then returned to Edinburgh. I have worked for Saheliya, a specialist mental health and well-being support organisation for black, minority ethnic, asylum seeker, refugee and migrant women and girls. I have also worked for Dunedin Canmore Housing Association and for a charity for elderly people in the Chinese community in Edinburgh.

I joined Viewpoint in 2015 as a mobile Coordinator and had the opportunity to work as a Housing Advisor on a temporary basis for a few months before becoming the Coordinator at St Albans. I am now back working as a Housing Advisor and am enjoying being part of the team.

Fun Fact: I love the outdoors and last October my family and I went camping in North Berwick. It was very muddy and at times cold but it was a lot of fun and I would do it again.





Fire safety



The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have reported that over the last five years 61% of all accidental dwelling fire fatalities were people aged 60 and over.

For Viewpoint, as a landlord specialising in older person housing, this is a worrying statistic. The aim of this article is to list the most common causes of fires and highlight some of the actions you can take to reduce the risk. Further guidance can be found within your tenant handbook.

Common Causes of Fire and simple actions you can take

Cooking

- Keep looking when you're cooking – do not leave pans unattended
- Do not cook if you are very tired or if you have been drinking alcohol or taking drugs.
- Use an electric fat fryer rather than a traditional chip pan as they are fitted with safety cut outs.

Heating

- Switch off portable fan or electric heaters when leaving the house or going to bed.
- Do not dry clothes over portable heaters or fires.

Smoking and candles

- Do not smoke in bed.
- Keep candles away from flammable items and blow them out when leaving the room.
- Make sure cigarettes are properly stubbed out in an ashtray and empty your ashtray regularly.
- Have a torch and batteries available for power cuts.

Electrics

- Switch off all unnecessary electrical equipment.
- Do not charge your phone or other electronics on a bed or other soft furnishings.
- Ensure cables are in visibly good condition.
- Do not use washing machines, dishwashers etc. when you are asleep or out of the house

- Fridges and freezers are designed to be left on 24 hours a day – ensure they are safe by registering them and your other white goods at www.registermyappliance.org.uk. If you do this, you will be contacted if there are any safety issues.

To help ensure fire safety within your property, Viewpoint undertake a programme of 2 yearly Fire Risk Assessments. These assessments are carried out by a competent external contractor and are used to identify fire hazards and the measures we can take to reduce the risks.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to completely remove the risk of fire. Our properties have systems in place to alert you if a fire does break out.

In the event of fire, most of our properties operate a 'stay-put' policy and you are advised to stay in your home unless advised otherwise by the Fire Service. However, what if a fire breaks out in your own home? Have you considered how you would get out?

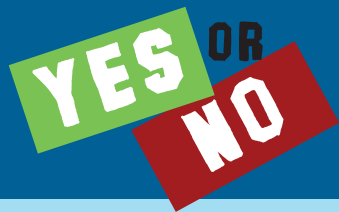
When thinking about your escape plan, it is important to consider the points below:

- How will you be alerted if a fire starts within your own home and what is your escape route?
- Do you understand the evacuation plan for the property you live in?
- A serious fire is most likely to happen at night when you are asleep. Consider what you would do in this situation. For example, would you be able to locate your door keys quickly?
- Is your escape route free of obstacles? Do you have a clear route to your final exit? If you have to pass through corridors and common areas to leave your property are these areas kept clear of obstacles and flammable items?

Additional measures that help lower the risk include testing smoke alarms regularly, keeping communal areas clear and unobstructed and ensuring fire doors are not propped open or otherwise disabled.

As part of Viewpoint's continuous improvement on fire safety, if you live in our retired, sheltered, or enhanced sheltered accommodation your Sheltered Housing Coordinator will be visiting you soon to discuss your fire safety.

Tenant Participation



Is it for me?



The answer is **YES** and this article is very important as it is about you and the services you receive.

Tenant Participation sounds formal and a bit intimidating but honestly, it's not.

Tenant Participation is about making sure that you have the necessary information and allowing you the opportunity to influence the decisions that are made about the services you receive. This can be done in so many ways, and Viewpoint want to make it easy for you to get involved.

Our Tenant Participation Strategy outlines how we plan to engage with you. The strategy is reviewed every three years and a report is sent to the Board on progress on an annual basis and a plan for the year ahead. The plan for the year ahead, once approved, is published on our website.

This year we were due to review the strategy and the work on this started last year with Heather, our Tenant Participation and Communications Coordinator, getting out and about at quarterly meetings and coffee mornings talking to tenants in groups and as individuals about how they wanted this to work.

What was very clear is that most people want to be involved at a local level – they want to be involved in improving things in the area in which they currently live. As a result, we have kept local involvement at the heart of our strategy. This may mean going to a coffee morning and talking to your coordinator, or attending a quarterly meeting with your Housing Officer and Technical Officer. Maybe it will be completing a repair satisfaction survey so that we can see how our contractors are doing and what you think about them. On the other hand, it could be filling out a consultation survey or just reading Newspoint to find out what our plans are.

Moreover, your views make a difference. Two recent examples are:

- The results of the survey on the Housing support review helped Viewpoint make a decision to retain services, as that was clearly what tenants wanted.

- The keeping of pets questionnaire was sent out in Newspoint in 2021 and the 300 responses we received helped shape what our policy looks like today.

There is no doubt that your views made a difference.

If you want, you can be more involved as a Tenant Volunteer. We retain a list of tenants, who have indicated that they would like to be more involved. They help us review the policies that directly affect you, or to develop or review information leaflets so that they meet your needs.

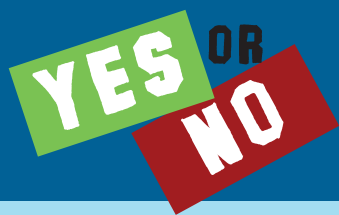
Tenant Volunteers also have the opportunity to comment and ask questions on our performance. Through this, tenants can identify areas of our services that they feel need reviewed and the tenants lead on this, form a working group and after they complete the work, they send a report to the Board of Management, with recommendations. We currently have a group of tenants who are working on reviewing the customer service standards and we hope to be able to update you on this in our next issue of Newspoint.

A group of tenants started to review our lettable standard in 2020, prior to lockdown. The lettable standard is the standard we aim to achieve for an empty property prior to a new tenant moving in. The tenants review group had carried out the desktop exercise and were able to provide an interim report to the Board. The review group will now carry out some inspections of empty properties that are ready to let to see if we are actually doing what we say we will.

In taking part Viewpoint can provide transport to meetings, so no worry about getting on and off buses or finding your way around in a strange area.

If you would like any further information on getting involved please contact Heather on 0131 662 5142, email tp@viewpoint.org.uk or speak to any member of staff.

Tenant Participation



Is it for me?



But I live in Fife

We appreciate that travelling to Edinburgh for a meeting can be difficult and off putting, even if we are providing transport.

In 2019, we set up a group for Fife tenants to focus on Fife issues. We have been unable to sustain this, as there is insufficient interest at this time. However if that changes please contact Heather (see above) or any member of staff, as we are more than happy to support a group working for Fife tenants only.

As for taking part in policy reviews or review groups, perhaps we need to look at making technology work for us and use Zoom (or similar) to allow you to take part.

If you don't know how to use Zoom or don't have the equipment that would allow you to use this then no worries as we can help. Again just contact us and we will work with you to try to make this happen, so you can take part.

But I work

This is certainly something that we will need to explore further in the coming year to ensure that you have the opportunity to be involved.

We could look at forming a group that operates outwith office hours and using technology to allow people to attend. As with tenants living in Fife we can look to see how we can make this happen for those that are interested.

If you are a tenant volunteer and are interested in a specific project, then again we can look to changing the timing of that meeting to ensure that you can be involved.

We are more than happy to look at any other ideas you have. Just contact Heather on 0131 662 5142, email tp@viewpoint.org.uk or speak to any member of staff.

We only have walkabouts, as there is nowhere to meet

Some of you live in areas where there is no common lounge to meet, and sometimes standing in the street in the pouring rain talking to us may not be that appealing.

Do you have any idea how we could get around this? Perhaps you think that at least once a year we should hire a local facility to allow you the opportunity to sit down and talk with us. Maybe we need to look at how technology can help us, or maybe you think that having the walkabout is enough.

Let me know what you think, or if you have any ideas on this so that we ensure that local involvement works for you too. Contact Heather on 0131 662 5142, email tp@viewpoint.org.uk or speak to any member of staff.

What about our new Tenant Participation Strategy 2023 – 2026

The strategy was developed by being out and about, listening to what you wanted. It was then drafted and discussed at the Leadership Team in Viewpoint and then with our Tenant volunteers.

The strategy will now go to the Board in March 2023 for approval and once finalised we will post on our website (www.viewpoint.org.uk), along with the plan for the coming year. If you wish a paper copy of the final document then please ask any member of staff.

We look forward to working with you in the coming year.





Switching Off the Copper Telephone

What this means for you and your development?

The copper telephone system (the telephone landlines we use today) was implemented in 1877 and is well over a century old. As a result, it is expensive to maintain and that expense is increasing as more devices switch to the digital network.

As a result, the copper network (also known as 'analogue') is being phased out and BT intend to switch off the copper network by the end of 2025. It will not happen all at once and your landline supplier will be making plans now. You do not have to do anything until your telephone provider contact you.

What does this mean for my development?

This affects businesses and Viewpoint will have to look at changing how it operates. One thing that is affected is our Telecare Services, which operate on the copper network. We are starting our

preparations for the switch over now so that in 2025 all our properties which have telecare equipment will be ready for this change.

The first noticeable stage of our preparations is to replace all our telecare equipment. When we are going to carry out the work in your development, you will be invited to a meeting and we will explain exactly what we are going to do and give you the chance to ask questions. The disruption in your home will be kept to a minimum as we replace the system and pull cords in your home.


If you have any queries regarding this, please do not hesitate to contact your Coordinator or Technical Officer.

Our plan to replace the Telecare Systems is as follows:

What does this mean for my landline at home?

Your telephone provider will write to you in advance to let you know when this is happening in your area. You do not need to do anything until your telephone provider gets in touch with you to explain what they are doing and what the options are.

Telephone landlines will still exist, and you can still have a landline telephone at home, however the network that the phone uses will be different.

Year 1 2022/23	Year 2 2023/24	Year 3 2024/25
Croft-An-Righ	Gillespie Lodge	Ettrick Road
Inverard House	Preston Tower	Woodthorpe
Bavelaw / Lennox Tower	Buchan Gardens	Dell Court / Woodhall Road
Northwood House	Haugh Park	Lynedoch House
	Argyle Park House	Craiglea Court / Morningside Drive
	Old Farm Court	Glenesk House
	Fleming Court / Ogilvie Terrace	City Park
	Ingham Court / Salisbury Rd	Deanery Close
	Maidencraig / Cockburn Court	EFC / Grange Loan / Findhorn
	Lade/Mill	Richmond Court
	Kilravock House	St Albans Court
	Balfour House	Letham Court / Scoonie Drive
	John Hunter Court	



Rent and Service Charge Changes Agreed for 2023/2024

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.

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 7 February 2023, 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 was to apply a

- 7% increase to rent charges
- 7% increase to laundry facilities, common area expenses and landscaping charges
- 5% increase to housing support charges
- 9.25% increase to central heating or central heating and hot water charges

The Board approved the proposal and the changes will take effect from 1 April 2023. 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.

246 surveys were completed (19.6% 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 some of your feedback to the questions we asked:

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

Strongly Agree

10.57%

Agree

42.28%

Neither Agree or Disagree

25.20%

Disagree

14.23%

Strongly Disagree

2.85%

No Response

4.87%

Do you feel you get value for money from Viewpoint?

13.82%

44.72%

22.36%

10.98%

4.47%

3.65%

Do you need any help, advice or assistance



We fully appreciate that the cost of living crisis is of great concern to you all. We want to make sure that you know where to ask for help and advice. Listed below are some services and contact details, however if this does not meet your needs then please ask and we will see if we can help you. That may mean making you aware of, or assisting you, to contact other services.

Your Rent Increase Letter

If you have any queries regarding your rent increase letter then please do not hesitate to call us on 0131 668 4247 (Option 2) for advice.

Welfare Benefit Advice

We employ a Welfare Benefits Officer (Eleanor Eccles) who can check that you are claiming any benefits you are entitled to, help you fill in forms to apply for benefits and assist you in making an appeal against a decision on your benefits if required.

You can contact Eleanor by telephone on 0131 662 5144 or by email on eleanor.eccles@viewpoint.org.uk.

Alternatively, you can speak to any member of staff and ask them to make a referral to Eleanor on your behalf.

Debt Advice

We do not employ a Debt Advice Officer; however, we do pay for an independent debt advice service for our tenants and can refer you to this service. Please contact Eleanor (our Welfare Benefits Officer) if you would like to access this service on 0131 662 5144 or email eleanor.eccles@viewpoint.org.uk.

Foodbanks

If you are struggling financially then you can get some help with food from foodbanks.

Some foodbanks have a referral system and others you can self-refer. To find out more details about your nearest foodbank you can find the information

online, see below. If you are unable to access this information on line or would like more information about referrals you can either speak to your coordinator or telephone our main office on 0131 668 4247 (option2) where one of our housing advisors will be happy to help you.

Edinburgh Foodbanks

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cost-living/food-bank-information

Fife Foodbanks

www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/benefits-and-money-advice/food-banks/access-to-food-locations

Midlothian Foodbanks

www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200301/cost_of_living

East Lothian Foodbanks

www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210634/covid-19/12506/food_resources_in_east_lothian

Warm Spaces

We are aware that some of our tenants do not live in accommodation where there is a communal heating system. Tenants who do have communal heating are protected at the moment from the big price increases that many of us have had to deal with.

If you are struggling to keep warm, your Local Authority have set up some warm spaces that you can visit to help keep your fuel bills down.

Details of these can be found online or you can contact our main office on 0131 668 4247 (option 2) and one of our housing advisors can help you find the nearest warm space to you.

Edinburgh Warm Spaces

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/warmandwelcoming

Fife Warm Spaces

<https://our.fife.scot/gethelp/topics/support-with-heating-and-utility-costs/warm-spaces>





Almost Twenty Years at Glenesk

By Henry Tyrell and Irene Reid

Irene Reid and Henry Tyrell moved to Glenesk House within weeks of each other in 2004. Nineteen years later Irene and Henry are still tenants at Glenesk and are good friends.

I caught up with Irene and Henry to find out a bit more about them and their time at Glenesk.

Henry is an extremely young 95 years old, and, despite his sight failing, remains very active. He loves gardening, practises yoga, and goes swimming and ballroom dancing. And if that is not enough, he also goes to the gym three times per week. He has no direct connections with Edinburgh or the Lothians but he does have family in the area.

Henry was in the navy and when he left at 20, he started a career in the mines. Among other places, he worked at the pit at Newtongrange and the tin mines in Cornwall. He completed his certificates for working in the mines at night school and was sought after by private mining companies to help open and ensure safety at new mines. He travelled around the country with his family in tow and really enjoyed his jobs.

Henry come from a very tiny place in Stirlingshire and had a long walk to school or to any shops. His home had an outside toilet and life was tough, made more difficult when his mum died when he was very young. He has fond memories of his mum, especially her getting him ready for school on the last day that he saw her. He was sent to an orphanage where there were 40 beds to a dorm. Life was not easy and Henry told me about the 'recognised bully boys' at the orphanage but they did not get to bully Henry as he stood up to them and didn't give in easily.

Irene had a very different life to Henry and laughed when she said at least she had an inside toilet. Irene was a nurse and among other things, she was a Sister at Longmore Hospital for twelve years. She then

moved to Abbeyfield House in Peebles looking after eight elderly people on a daily basis. Irene and her husband actually lived on site at Abbeyfield House. She was then offered another job to open another site for residents with extra care, where she employed staff and was responsible for the rota and wages.

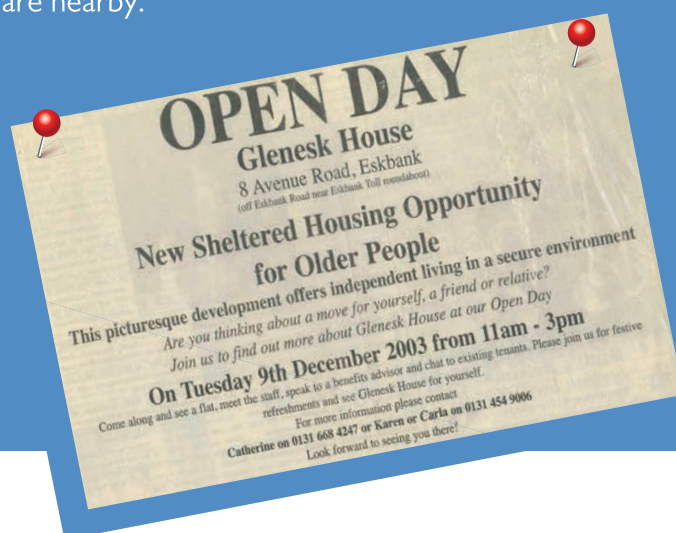
Irene went into nursing at 17 years old and the pay was about £7 per month. During the training, the student nurses had to pay in advance for their exams, although they got the money back if they passed – a great incentive to do well.

Irene has family nearby as well as family scattered across the globe.

When Irene and Henry came to Glenesk there were no social activities. It was Irene and another tenant who arranged outings for the other tenants, often visiting the place they were going to go to make sure it was suitable for everyone. There was entertainment and trips to places like Portobello and North Berwick. And there were lots of parties.

Henry and Irene both told great stories of the social life at Glenesk when they moved in. Henry said he was very good at buttering bread and cutting Swiss roll – all essential life skills. They said things are not the same but everyone is older and the drive to do all these activities is no longer there.

Both Irene and Henry are happy at Glenesk and feel looked after and have the joy of knowing their families are nearby.





Irene and Henry

Page 16 Advertiser, December 4, 2003

Home comforts at Glenesk House

SECURE. Comfortable. Picturesque. Just three words to describe Glenesk House – Viewpoint Housing Association's latest sheltered development for older people.

The Victorian family home with its seven-acre grounds has 20 self-contained one-bedroom flats for rent. It is situated at 8 Avenue Road, Eskbank, Dalkeith.

Glenesk is not a care or residential home – independence is maintained. Each flat has a living room with kitchen area, a bedroom, and a bathroom, with a walk-in shower.

The common room has been restored to reflect the house's Victorian heritage and provides tenants the opportunity to meet for coffee and other social functions.

The stunning grounds contain trees and plants from all over the world. Wildlife splendour can be seen from the house and tenants can enjoy the garden without the worry of maintaining it.

All Glenesk tenants have Scottish Secure Tenancy agreements and pay a monthly rent and service charge. Depending on circumstances, housing benefit is available to help pay this charge.

The service charge covers heating, concessionary TV licence and optional contents insurance cover. The monthly rent and service charge means fewer bills landing on the doormat!

Glenesk House was gifted to Viewpoint in 1976 for the association to provide accommodation for older people. The project is a unique partnership between Viewpoint Housing Association, Communities Scotland and Midlothian Council.

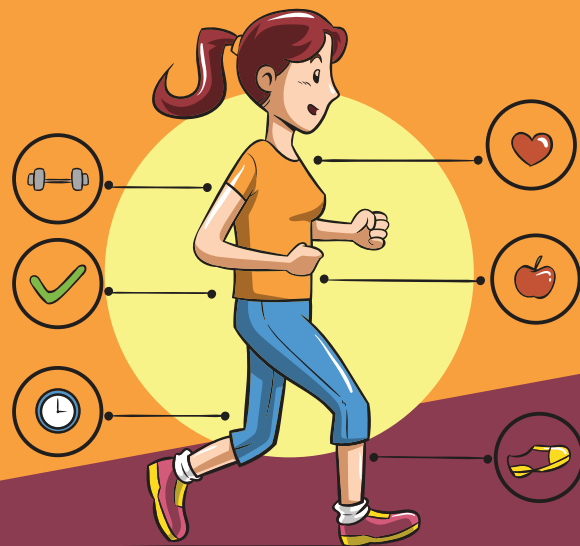
The partnership, along with the generosity and foresight of the family who donated the house and the charitable support of Viewpoint Trust, has provided a range of housing and support services which will benefit the people of Dalkeith for many years to come.

Glenesk House open day on Tuesday, December 9, will give people the chance to view the accommodation and grounds for themselves. A housing benefit advisor will be there to answer questions and offer advice on the financial assistance available from the council.

Viewpoint Housing Association has more than 50 years' experience in providing sheltered housing for both men and women. Glenesk House is the latest addition to nearly 1400 properties run by the association in Edinburgh, the Lothians and Fife.

Tales from the Gym

Heather decides to take action!



So what did I expect when I decided I needed a personal trainer? After all what did they do that I could not do myself? According to what I had seen on television, personal trainers made you exercise so hard that you cried. What did I want to do that for?

Yet here I was in August 2021, giving this careful consideration. To be honest I hate exercise so I don't tend to engage in it unless I really have to. However, with pre lock down weight plus lockdown weight plus post lockdown weight, I was struggling to do the basic things in life because I was too big, too tired and too unfit. I was a couch potato and a heart attack waiting to happen.

So, I felt I needed a personal trainer to help me exercise, get fit and lose weight. Then I thought how do you find someone who is right for you – the obvious answer was to ask 'Mrs Google'!

The first personal trainer I spoke to was very pleasant but launched into what I would be able to do after 2 weeks and then 4 weeks working with them - but they didn't really know me and that I did absolutely nothing that resembled exercise. It kind of put me off and I decided they were not the one for me.

So what next? I could abandon the idea or try again – and I nearly gave up. However, 'my mama raised no quitter' and I tried again and arranged a call with a personal trainer called Chris Anderson.

I did not intend to make a decision that day but the call with Chris went really well. He listened to me: where I was at and what I wanted and needed from a personal trainer, my fears about going near a gym – he got the full story. In addition, he was honest about what he could and couldn't do, but most of all he promised he wouldn't make me cry!

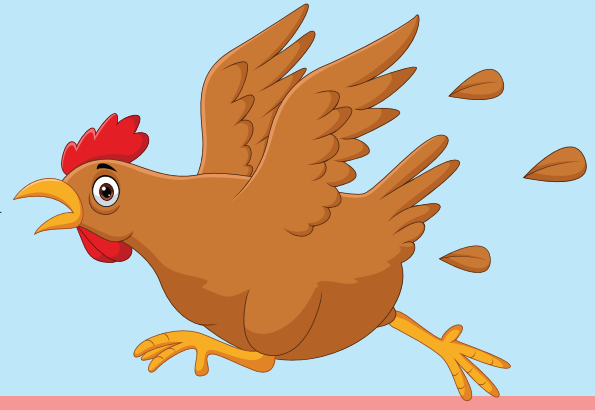
I signed up on the spot – minimum of 1 month, two sessions of one hour per week (before work) at Pure Gym in Exchange Crescent. Chris had said that ideally I should give it a go for three months. The cynic in me thought I'd be lucky to last a week but a part of me knew I had to do something. I was only 56, grossly overweight and struggling to do anything.

I mean it couldn't kill me – could it?

Find out if I actually make it to the gym in the next issue of Newspoint.

The Chicken Run

by Valerie Blair DeVilliers



Valerie attends a writing group and they were asked to write a story with the following words: beans, waffle, stool, filing, cheese

Bank holiday has arrived and we are off to Scout camp to the village of Shirring, where it is said, Viking ghosts still roam the countryside.

At the grand old age of between 11 and 14 years, who is afraid of ghosts? There are nine of us going but we are not just camping for the sake of it, we are there to get our badges. Some for first aid and others, like myself – Survival.

When I told my mum she went red in the face, her eyes started to blink rapidly, her hand raised to her mouth as she said ‘your survival badge’, with that she collapsed laughing. I was very hurt. I thought she’d be pleased. But no, she is laughing so much tears are running down her cheeks, and every so often she coughs and tries to apologise only to end up laughing more.

I walk away feeling affronted. Just then, dad walks into the kitchen wondering what all the hilarity is about. Mum stands up, hand leaning on the kitchen sink and says ‘Ben’s going camping this weekend to get his survival badge’. She starts to laugh again.

Dad says ‘Now then, it can’t be that bad, it’ll do the lad good, give him a sense of achievement’.

I’m sitting on the stairs listening to the conversation below when I hear dad saying ‘I’ll have a talk with him, you’ve probably hurt his feelings. He’s 12 years now becoming a man, you have to let go’. I turned and

raced upstairs and into my bedroom before dad came knocking on the door. He comes in and walks over to me, ruffles my hair and sits on the stool. ‘You’re mum doesn’t mean to laugh at you, she just doesn’t realise that you are growing up, she still looks at you as her little boy’.

‘Now then, when are you going to camp and what do you need?’ Thank goodness boys have dads.

He starts to tell me about his army days camping in the deserts and how to survive. He goes to the linen cupboard and takes out a blanket saying ‘No sleeping bag, this is what we had’ and lays the blanket on the floor. ‘Now watch’ he says as he folds one side of the blanket halfway over, then takes the other side and lays it on top. He repeats it once more, tucking the bottom under. ‘There’ he says ‘a survival sleeping bag’. My mouth falls open. I was hoping for one of those fancy duck down ones with the zip and hood. Dad looks really pleased with himself remembering how to do it.

‘Right now, what are you taking to eat?’ ‘Oh that’s easy’ I say, laughing and relaxing with “my dad, my hero”, ‘sausages, bacon, black pudding, eggs and beans’. ‘Um’ says dad, ‘anything else?’

‘A frying pan’ I shout triumphantly. ‘Something you have forgotten’ says dad. I look at him intently hoping for a hint but nothing was forthcoming. ‘Matches’ I shout. ‘And?’ says dad. ‘That’s it’ I said.



'This is a survival badge remember' says dad. Then I remembered clean socks and underpants! Dad looked at me and said 'Maybe your mother is right', he shakes his head and sighs before saying 'Now think, think properly, think of what you do every day.' We sit together in silence, me giving my dad a sideways glance, hoping for a hint. Nothing.

Finally, dad speaks 'What do you do when you get up in the morning?' 'I put on my school clothes'. Dad says sharply 'you're on a survival course, No school'. 'Oh right, but you said...'. Dad relents 'Okay clothes on then what?' 'I come down stairs for breakfast'. Dad rolls his eyes and says 'then what?' 'Mum makes me breakfast'. He looks at me with a sad expression on his face and says 'Son, I worry about you'.

The sun is shining outside and I can hear my friends laughing and shouting to one another. Dad stands up and walks out the room. I just sit for I can see I have disappointed him. Shortly after he comes back with a list of items, I shall need for survival.

The day arrives; I'm packed, new down sleeping bag with hood, rolled up, plus other items for survival; water, small spade, some flour to make a waffle with cheese, which is a treat, and a small axe. In a small wicker cage a live chicken with food. Everyone looks baffled, I just smile.

We have set up camp, fire lit, nine of us, including scout master, water bubbling over fire along with sausages, black pudding, bacon, beans, sizzling in the frying pan, someone had brought potatoes so these

were stuck onto the end of a large stick sometimes being held, sometimes pushed into the ash.

We are happy singing Scout songs and general excited conversation. The chicken in the cage next to Ben. Time for bed, food all finished lights out. Tomorrow Sunday.

There is no food for breakfast, it was all eaten yesterday, only the chicken in the cage!

The boys moon around kicking and throwing stones, some put wood on the fire. What for, there is nothing to eat. They are hungry. The Scoutmaster tries to distract them by doing various chores. But no, they were hungry and annoyed.

Suddenly a loud squawk rent the air from the direction of Ben's chicken. Running with the squawking bird under his arm was one of the hungry Scouts, followed by Ben shouting 'Give it back' and waving the axe in the air, which he had been quietly filing to make sure it was sharp before using it on the chicken – for the Sunday roast.

The other boys followed the two until the boy holding the chicken was rounded up.

Sunday evening came, happy contented boys sitting round the campfire licking lips and fingers declaring that that was the best roast chicken they had ever tasted.

Ben went home with his Survivor's Badge



I do hope you have enjoyed Valerie's story. And remember you too can have your story, picture, poem etc. included in Newspoint. Just email to newspoint@viewpoint.org.uk or send by mail to Heather Jeffrie, Viewpoint Housing Association, 4 South Oswald Road, Edinburgh, EH9 2HG

100th Birthday at Marian House

By Jill Shaw



Jean Thomas, a resident at Marian House, celebrated her 100th birthday towards the end of last year.

As you can see Jean received a birthday card from the King, and was the first one in Marian House to do so.

Congratulations Jean and hope you had a great day.





PLATINUM JUBILEE
CELEBRATION

Platinum Jubilee at Gillespie Crescent



As you know in the last two issues of Newspoint we published jubilee celebration photographs from across our complexes.

I tried to make sure that everyone was included, but somewhere along the line Gillespie Crescent did not have any photographs published – my apologies to all tenants at Gillespie

However I do know that they held a marvellous celebration that was enjoyed by everyone and here are some photos from their event. Well done to all those involved in making the day a success



King's Coronation Celebrations



I am sure that many of you are now looking to celebrating the King's Coronation in May and I look forward to receiving your photographs in time for the Autumn edition of Newpoint.



The Page Turners



Do you like to read and are prepared to try something different?

Do you enjoy a laugh and want to meet some like minded people?

Then come and join the Page Turners – Viewpoint's very own online book club.

We are not high-brow (far from it) but we do enjoy getting together online once a month for a chat about the book we have read and then putting the world to rights.

Interested: Call Heather on 0131 662 5142 or email heather.jeffrie@viewpoint.org.uk

Coffee Mornings at Haugh Park

By Kasia Murthy



Thursday 1 December 2022 saw the first coffee morning arranged by our new Coordinator Kasia. We had special guests from Tap Into IT (Mike and Sheila). As many of you will know Tap Into IT help us to get online and to use the IT equipment we have to make our lives easier. Lots of laughter, lovely treats, great time. Brilliant way to start the day.



And then we had our first coffee morning of 2023. There's no better way than to start the year with a bit of colour, music, laughter and good company. It was a fantastic opportunity to catch up and plan for our future activities at Haugh Park.





Kilravock Craft Club

By Fiona Campbell

Over at Kilravock tenants got busy with some crafting and have been making cards for upcoming birthdays and other special celebrations and have shared photos of their work.





HALLOWEEN COFFEE MORNING AT OLD FARM COURT

Tenants turning up at Old Farm Court for the coffee morning at Halloween were met with a rather frightening sign, telling them to 'Keep Out' and only enter if they 'dare'!

Our brave tenants at Old Farm were not put off by the signs and dared to go in.

And once through that door there was more fright in sight when they were met by a devil and a witch (a.k.a. Carol and Michele). However the devil and the witch did serve up fabulous tea and cakes and everyone had a good laugh and a lovely feed that morning



HALLOWEEN AT BUCHAN GARDENS BY DANNY RANKIN

Buchan Gardens held a Halloween Party in our hall on Saturday 29th October. We all arranged to meet at 6:30 p.m., as Strictly Come Dancing was to be shown on our large screen later.

Most of our residents, who attended, dressed up in costumes. We all enjoyed the show and had 'nibbles' afterwards. Music was then played from the 50's, 60's and 70's as requested by each of our party. We then

had a session of Karaoke where John and Danny sang a few songs.

A great night was had by all and we were all glad to be back to some sort of normality after our long break caused by Covid.



HALLOWEEN AT MILL AND LADE



By Kate Herbert

Here are the photos from the Halloween fish 'n' chip night that we had on Friday 28th October 2022.

The evening began with the fish 'n' chips being delivered from Francos of Stockbridge at 6pm prompt.

The Fish Suppers were accompanied by bread 'n' butter and a big pot of tea and once that was all eaten we had another round of tea with cake.

Then a small glass of Wine to finish the evening singing along to the Rat pack

A great night was had by all.



HALLOWEEN AT WOODTHORPE BY CAITLIN FEUTHERER

Over at Woodthorpe there was a big Halloween celebration on 28 October 2022. Fantastic costumes, lots of food and something to drink coupled with good company and laughter – perfect.

The costumes look great and we had a fabulous time.



Celebrating Scotland's Bard at Buchan Gardens

By Danny Rankin



On Saturday the 28th January 2023, Buchan Gardens held their annual Burns' Supper Night. This was the first Burns' Supper since 2019 because of the Covid outbreak. Everyone was served with Haggis, neeps and tatties. The ladies of the Buchan Gardens Tenants' Group prepared the meal which was enjoyed by all. As always, it was nice to be able to invite the members of 'Buttons and Bows', our favourite local Scottish band, back to entertain us. In the band were 6 accordionists and 2 fiddlers. They kept us entertained for around 2 hours. Everyone had a good sing-song to the many Scottish songs that were played. It was very good to be able to get back to some sort of normality and have our Burns' Supper once again.

Here are our photos – one of the hall filled with happy faces and the other of the Buttons and Bows band.



OLD FARM COURT BURNS' SUPPER

OH, HOW WE DO LIKE TO EAT! We were treated to beautiful haggis, tatties and turnip, washed down with a glass of wine or juice. Since our entertainment wasn't arriving till later, we decided to 'Pipe In' the Cloutie Dumpling instead of the Haggis.

Trish dutifully followed Harry, the piper, and carried the delicacy into the Lounge to some great Scottish music before it was sliced up for our taste buds to enjoy with a bit of cream on board.

Marion Marshall read a poem written by her daughter Lisa, who also lives at Old Farm Court. It was a take on Burns' 'Address Tae a Haggis'

FAE THE HAGGIS TAE THE DUMPLING
An ode tae ma sister, Cloutie is her name.
She's a wee stalky dumpling and nae other is the same.

Pit thigither wae kind hands so that everyone can chew it,
She's a braw-lookin lassie made up wi veggie suet.

Brought straight tae yer table wi a Scotsman piping grand,
Pour over fresh-made custard by the masters lovin' hand.

Tuck in and fill your belly then relax and listen in,
while delightful voices fill our ears with sonnets to the brim.

As we enjoy the company of friends and neighbours near,
Tonight we toast oor favourite bard.
Rabbie Burns your night is here.



The food was all prepared by our wonderful Social Committee – absolutely delicious. Thanks go to the committee and helpers for a brilliant evening.



Lisa and Vivian Murphy having a laugh and enjoying themselves.

SOME OF THE BOYS and 2 of the teachers from Merchiston Castle School came and entertained us on piano, violins galore, pipes and drums and a soloist. The boys are all just learning and we're a very willing audience – a stone's throw away from the school. They only need to cross the road. How handy is that!



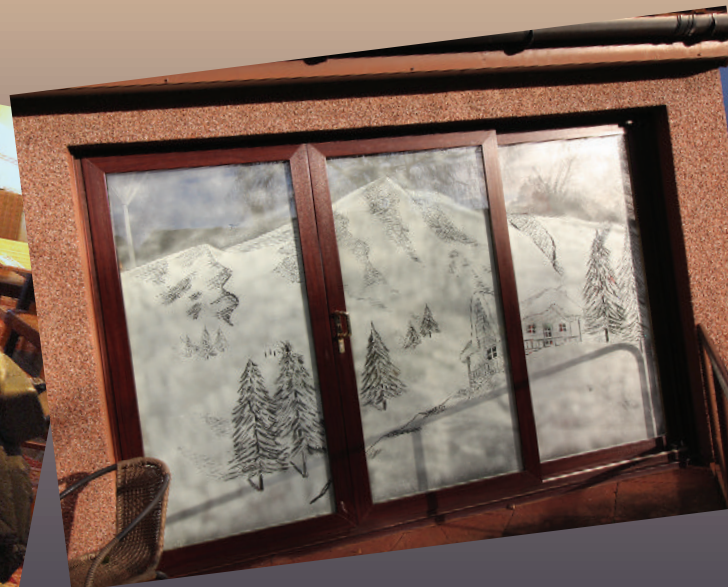


Christmas at Buchan Gardens

By Danny Rankin

The residents of Buchan Gardens had their annual Christmas Lunch at the Brewer's Fayre in Glenrothes. This was the first Christmas get-together since the Covid lockdown. Everyone had a great 3 course Christmas lunch and then retired to our communal hall to keep the festivities going. Entertainment was provided by our own residents either singing at the karaoke microphone or listening and singing along to favourite songs. It was nice to be able to come together at Christmas once again after a couple of years on our own.

One photo shows the residents at Brewer's Fayre and the other one shows our patio doors decorated with a snow scene. The snow scene was sprayed onto the glass by Wilma and Danny Rankin, two of our residents. We try to make a different scene every Christmas.





Scottish Housing Regulator

National Panel

Add your Voice, help us improve services...

Would you like to help improve social landlord services in Scotland? Add your voice to the National Panel of Tenants and Service Users!

The Panel is one of the ways that the Scottish Housing Regulator can hear what tenants and service users think and make sure it focuses on the important things. Members receive occasional surveys and invite to take part in other feedback exercises. Participation is always optional and you can leave at any time.

We want to include a diverse range of people on the Panel, including those who are not involved in other ways of giving views on landlord services. Members include **council and housing association tenants**, people who have used **homeless services**, homeowners who receive social landlord **factoring or common repairs**, and people living on social rented **Gypsy/Traveller sites**.

Ready to join?

Online at www.bit.ly/shr-panel

Call 0800 433 7212

Get a printed form on natpan@engagescotland.co.uk
or call 0700 433 7212

