

Tenants Magazine

newsbite

ISSUE 56 WINTER 2022



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A word from *Carol Hannaford* Development Officer for Tenant & Resident Participation



Hello

I do hope you enjoy reading this copy of Newsbite – the Communication & Events Group – tenants like yourself work with the Council to produce this magazine. I appreciate it has been difficult these last few years but as we move forward, I would like to try and encourage you to get involved in your Housing Service.

We have restarted **Community Led Walkabouts**, which take place all over the city four times a year. At these walkabouts officers are present from various services in the Council as well as our Partners led by a member of the Senior Management Team. It was great to see pupils from Woodside Primary School walking with Council Officers highlighting what they would like to see where they live – of course top of list was a better play area for older children.

We also have the **Resident Led Inspections** in all our mainstream multi storeys – where all tenants and residents are encouraged to attend and tell us what you would like to see in your multi. These are led by your Housing & Support Officer supported by the Senior Housing & Support Officer and take place every six months in each multi.

These are just two ways you can get involved but of course if you want to start a **local tenant group** in your **Multi, Sheltered Housing Complex** or area then why not speak to your Housing & Support Officer who is there to assist you. There is lots of funding available for these groups. However, if you want to be more involved at a strategic level, for example you might want to;

- » Find out where your rent money is spent or how your housing service is performing.
- » Be interested in finding out more about Sheltered Housing policies or Multi Storey fire safety.
- » Find out how decisions are made at Committee – reading the reports, then the citywide groups are for you. Please see the Tenant Participation web site: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/housing/tenant-and-resident-participation

Think about making 2023 the year you got involved! I do hope you and your family have a wonderful festive period and all the best for 2023.

Thank you, *Carol*

A woman with blonde hair, wearing an orange and white striped scarf, is looking down with a thoughtful expression. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

Easing the Cost of Living Initiative

Citizens Advice Scotland are looking for organisations to help get vital self-help tools out to people struggling with the rising cost of living.

Citizens Advice Scotland is seeking to partner with organisations in order to combine the self-help assets we have with the delivery routes to audiences that partner organisations have. We hope that, in working together, we can help as many people as possible to cut costs, make savings and boost incomes to get through the cost of living crisis.

Citizens Advice Scotland has three online self-help tools, all aimed at providing people with key information and signposting to resources that will help improve their financial health. These tools provide critical support to people facing financial difficulty. They are:

- » **THE MONEY MAP** – This tool signposts to all the best websites that help people access support to boost incomes, save money and cut the costs of daily living. www.moneymap.scot
- » **COUNCIL TAX SAVINGS TOOL** – This tool assesses eligibility for council tax reductions, discounts and exemptions and signposts to where they can claim these savings. www.checkmycounciltax.scot
- » **PUBLIC ADVICE SITE** – the debt and money pages on the Citizens Advice Scotland website are an invaluable source of help and are updated regularly www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/

Citizens Advice Scotland is inviting organisations who have members, supporters, followers and other beneficiaries that would benefit from access to these online tools to become involved in the Easing the Cost of Living Initiative. Our ask is for organisations to commit to promoting these tools on a regular basis and we help by providing content, messaging, and other materials to use.

These online financial self-help tools can help relevant audiences to meet living costs, boost incomes, improve household budgets and support financial wellbeing in these difficult economic times. If your organisation is interested in getting involved in being part of the Easing the Cost of Living initiative and/or would like to find out more, please contact the Financial Health team at Citizens Advice Scotland by emailing CostofLiving@cas.org.uk

Supporting People to Claim the Benefits They're Entitled To – Use Our Online Benefit Calculator!

Support and advice is available for anyone concerned about the rising cost of living through our dedicated online website: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

There are different types of support available, from benefit advice, council tax reduction, help with fuel costs to where to access Warm Spaces. Through our Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) project we are working in partnership to increase the uptake of unclaimed benefits across Aberdeen City by supporting people claim the benefits they're entitled to.

We're doing this through many new improvement ideas, one of which is the online benefit calculator - a free online tool to enable people to check the benefits they may be entitled to. This is a quick and easy tool to use to make sure you're receiving all the financial support that you're entitled to and all information you provide remains anonymous.

Get started today at [Benefit calculator \(entitledto.co.uk\)](http://Benefitcalculator(entitledto.co.uk))

FACT

House fires and casualties increase during winter, with a high risk over the festive period. Aberdeen city council and scottish fire & rescue want to ensure you keep safe during the festive period and here are a few tips to help you.

FACT

Festive Safety Tips

- Check your smoke and heat alarms are working.
- Never place Christmas cards or decorations around any type of heater.
- Check your Christmas light plugs are fitted with the correct fuse, do not overload extension leads and ensure all electrical devices are Intertek BEAB approved – this means they have passed a safety standard.
- Always switch Christmas lights off and unplug them before you go to bed. Or when you go out.
- Never leave cooking unattended, especially when using hot oil. Be especially careful when taking certain medication, when tired or have consumed alcohol.
- Take time to check on elderly relatives and neighbours this Christmas as they are at greater risk from fire, particularly if they suffer from ill health or disability.
- Check fairy lights are in good working order and replace any bulbs that have blown.
- Bulbs can get very hot, do not let them touch materials that can scorch or burn easily, such as paper or fabrics.
- Extinguish all candles before you go to bed. Never leave a burning candle unattended especially in a bedroom.
- Keep candles, matches and cigarette lighters out of reach of children and never place lit candles where they can be knocked over by children.
- Always put candles on a heat resistant surface/ holder. Be especially careful with night lights and tea lights, which can get hot enough to melt plastic or ignite combustible Christmas decorations.
- Position candles away from objects that may catch fire, like Christmas trees, greeting cards, ribbons, and other decorations.
- Never move lit candles.
- Always use a candle snuffer or a spoon to extinguish candles or tea lights.

To request a free Home Fire Safety Visit, Call **0800 0731 999**
Text **'FIRE'** to **80800** or visit **www.firescotland.gov.uk** for further information.

The Hit Squad

The Hit Squad was set up with the intention of delivering Environmental Improvements, with a focus on helping maintain a clean and safe environment and to make a lasting contribution to the presentation of council housing estates in several locations throughout the city. Hot spots such as external bin areas and the entrances to internal bin chambers were identified as the source of most of the litter and fly-tipping in the estates and these have been targeted for the first phase of work for the hit squad.

Two teams have since been set up- One of the teams is covering the north side of the city with the second team covering the south side and the teams have the capacity to work together to tackle larger jobs or emergency clean ups as required.

The main purpose of both teams is to prevent the spread of litter and rubbish from bin areas by ensuring overspill is removed, and small items of flytipping are taken away. Larger items and white goods are reported directly to the Refuse team for collection and left neatly at a suitable location (usually beside the bin areas) for uplift.

Another important function of the Hit Squad is to link up with the Environmental Operatives (Estate Caretaker, Barrow Beat and Litter picker roles) to co-ordinate litter picking to cover large areas at a time.

The approach of the Hit Squad has been hugely successful, and the teams have been able to make a huge difference to several areas. One example of their success can be seen in Tillydrone, where the trial was undertaken, and the team were able to quickly raise the appearance and cleanliness of some of the most challenging areas. Feedback from residents has been great and the team has got to know their areas and the local people very well.



Their hard work has not gone unnoticed –

Tillydrone has been a 'go to' area for fly tipping for such a long time. We have no doubt our community is not the only area blighted by this antisocial behaviour.

However, Tillydrone Community Council is delighted to note the ongoing effort by Aberdeen City Council to attack this issue, the dedicated squad who patrol the area on a regular basis in an effort to keep our community clean and safe by removing goods such as old furniture and white goods has been much appreciated by our residents.

I thank you on behalf of Tillydrone.

Tillydrone Community Council

Moving forward, the aim is to diversify the role of the Hit Squad to include jobs such as additional weeding, moss removal from hardstanding areas, graffiti removal and lots of other quick fixes that will contribute make a lasting impression on the areas. As the role evolves, the benefits to the areas will be more obvious as standards continue to improve.

The team is a hard working one and their focus is on making a difference to the cleanliness of the local environment, providing a visible presence, and becoming a familiar, friendly face across the area.

2021/2022 Scottish Social Housing Charter Performance Report

Facts and figures about your landlord

Demand for our housing services continued and despite ongoing coronavirus restrictions we remained committed to delivering a high-quality service to all our tenants and customers. This included the provision of accommodations, repairs, and services to those experiencing homelessness.

If you would like to learn more about Housing Performance, why not attend our Housing, Performance and Budget group meetings online. For more information please visit www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/tenantparticipation

Aberdeen City Council has

22,402
properties



20,356
Tenancies



Tenants service satisfaction

62.67%

- Scottish average 87.7%



HOME

65.10%

Home offer refusals



New builds
216



88.18%

Tenancies sustained
for more than a year



97.48%

rent due collected
- Scottish average 99.3%



94%

Unintentional homeless
decisions completed in
21 Days

We fully rewired:



599
properties

We installed:



3,852
hard wired smoke detectors



1,739
heating systems



1,222
crime check doors

We replaced:



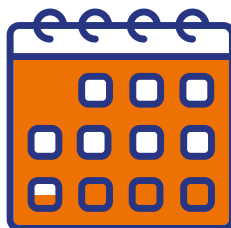
61
windows



163
kitchens



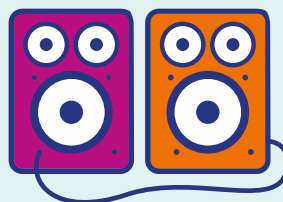
18,141 emergency repairs
carried out with an
average of 3 hrs 53
mins average
- Scottish average
4 hrs 12 mins



25,189 non emergency
repairs carried out with an
average of 7 days 11 hrs
- Scottish average 8 days 21 hrs



91.16%
repairs completed
right first time
- Scottish average
88.3%



99.31%
of anti-social
behaviour cases
resolved in the year

Safe Battery Disposal in Aberdeen

In July this year there was a fire at our Altens East Recycling Centre, which, despite the fire service attending within minutes and battling the fire for several hours, caused significant damage to the facility. Fortunately, no-one was injured in the fire however it has impacted people's jobs and forced a temporary change to our recycling operations whilst the recycling centre is out of use.

We can't say for certain what caused the fire, but the likelihood is that it was started by lithium ion battery in an electronic device such as vape or electronic toothbrush.

In 2022, we have more batteries in our homes than ever, powering everything from vacuum cleaners to toothbrushes and many of them are hidden within devices in places that we never see. Often when it's time to dispose of these devices they are thrown away with general rubbish or with household recycling which can lead to a serious risk of devices igniting, or even exploding, when crushed or punctured as they are compacted.

An independent report published in 2021 found that nearly 50% of all recycling and waste fires in the UK, of which there are hundreds each year, are started by lithium-ion batteries alone and that the total annual cost of these fires exceeds £150 million.

Electronic devices and batteries should never be put in your household waste and recycling or communal bins. In Aberdeen there are several battery recycling facilities, and you can also take devices to one of our Household Waste and Recycling Centres in Bridge of Don, Bucksburn, Hazlehead or Tullos.

You can enter your postcode into the locator tool at www.takecharge.org.uk/ to find your nearest battery recycling facility. The website also contains lots more information about the best ways to reuse and recycle unused electronic devices.

You can also find out more about what can and can't be put in each bin for your household by visiting the Aberdeen City Council website at:

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/bins-waste-and-recycling



Stand Up To Falls

In September, Bon Accord Care in Partnership with Stay Well Stay Connected and Sport Aberdeen embarked on Stand Up To Falls 2022. This was a month long campaign aiming to increase awareness of falls and what people can do to avoid falling.

From the age of 30, our muscles can lose up to 8% of their strength each decade, which can make daily activities more difficult and increase the risk of having a fall.

However, falls aren't an inevitable part of growing older and throughout the September, Bon Accord Care staff and service users focused on 5 different areas that can help reduce the likelihood of a fall:

1. Footcare
2. Equipment
3. Self-care
4. Home environment
5. Exercise



If you or someone you know is at risk of or experiencing falls, you can find out more about each of these topics on the Stand Up To Falls webpage:

www.bonaccordcare.com/falls2022

Exercise is a really simple way to maintain strength and balance and there are some quick and easy exercises you can do at home each day. Sport Aberdeen's Top Tip's videos can be found online and only take 5 minutes to do.

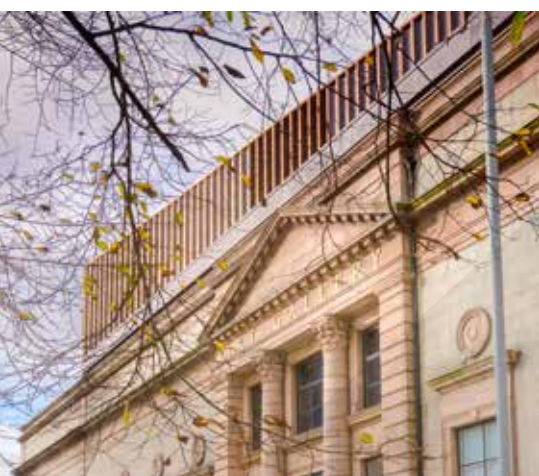
All you need is a sturdy surface and sensible footwear

www.sportaberdeen.co.uk/stand-up-to-falls

Our Aberdeen at Aberdeen Art Gallery



ABERDEEN
ART
GALLERY



Aberdeen Art Gallery and Housing Management have teamed up to deliver Our Aberdeen taster to tenants! Our Aberdeen is a programme of dementia-friendly events that bring people together to share their stories and feel part of a community. These relaxed sessions are led by Archives, Gallery & Museums (AAGM) staff and volunteers. They all enjoy a good chat over a fly cup while sharing artworks and objects from the collection!

In August, AAGM staff and volunteers visited tenants of Constitution Court to bring some of the magic of The Galloway Hoard: Viking-Age Treasure exhibition to the comfort of the Common Room. Tenants enjoyed getting their hands on exact copies of some of the stunning objects from this rare Viking-age hoard and chatting with the AAGM team about what the objects may have been used for and their importance to the people who made them 1,000 years ago.

Tenants also shared memories they have of Aberdeen Art Gallery, Maritime Museum and Provost Skene's House, and how these venues - and the city - have changed over the years. AAGM now invite all tenants to attend our sessions at Aberdeen Art Gallery. You can drop in to any the Our Aberdeen sessions on the last Thursday of the month, 11am – 12.30pm in Aberdeen Art Gallery. You can join friendly staff and volunteers for a cuppa and a blether, while we explore the collections and share stories. All sessions are free and open to anyone over the age of 16.

The Art Gallery is open every day and admission is free. You can also enjoy free lunchtime talks, 'pay-as-you-feel' lunchtime concerts and Musical Memories sessions, which are run by Alzheimer Scotland. See the What's On section of our website for details of these free events. We look forward to welcoming you!

www.aagm.co.uk



Alzheimer
Scotland
Action on Dementia



Woodside Community Gardens



Community Garden at Ferriers with-L-R, Michael Murray, Senior Housing Support Officer, Aleasha Murray, Harley Lumley (3), Liz Uyabeme, Chairperson of Community Garden Committee, Michelle Porter, Committee Member



Supporting Young Carers

Aberdeen City Libraries (ACL) were delighted to have its work with Young Carers in the city recognised nationally at The Scottish Library & Information Council (SLIC) Awards 2022. In partnership with Barnardo's Aberdeen Young Carers, the Library Service has met with our children and young people to provide opportunities for them to have time away from their caring responsibilities, learn new skills, be creative and have FUN!

The Young Carers have had the opportunity to share ideas about the programme and activities they'd like to try - including learning how to make their own comics with Neil Slorance; putting forward their ideas about a library collection; developing their voice with Magic Torch Comics and been animators for the day.

March will see the Young Carers launch their own comic to coincide with Young Carers Action Day in March! Working with Paul Bristow, Magic Torch Comics, the Young Carers had the opportunity to reflect upon and tell their story...to advocate for other Young Carers and let the wider community know what it means to be a Young Carer. Look out for information about the comic, funded by the WORD Centre and the WayWORD Festival, when it becomes available across the city from March.

On the back of this work, Aberdeen City Libraries will also launch a YP Supported Membership to enable Young Carers and Care-Experienced young people to access library services and facilities. More information on this coming soon!

The programme of support will continue into 2023. In February, the Young Carers will visit Central Library to participate in a coding and robotics session, something which the Young Carers can't wait to do!

Carol Doig
Children & Young People's Librarian

Woodside's Community Garden blossomed into life in May 2022 and has grown into Woodside's answer to the Garden of Eden.

This fantastic project came about because local children wanted a garden where they could come together, play, and grow Fruit and Vegetables. This project started during the COVID-19 pandemic and has given residents the opportunity to get to know their neighbours again and give back to the community that they had missed during the past 2 years.

Aleasha Murray, Harley Lumley (aged 3), Liz Uyabeme, Michelle Porter, pictured above, Kirstine Garland, Jenni Bateman, Shireen Smith, Freya Bowes, Charlene Kilpatrick, Stuart Mckessick and others joined together and formed the Woodside Community Garden Project Committee. Among the many reasons for creating this, the committee said that they wanted to "affect positive change in the community and to get to know her neighbours again".

The Community Garden has been able to bring the community together, supporting mental health and producing a variety of fruit and vegetables that have feed many families in the area. The intention is that any excess produce that is not used will be donated to the Woodside Pantry for members to enjoy. Any residents wishing to help and support the project would be most welcome.

The committee recently organised a Harvest Festival at the beginning of September to celebrate the great work that the project has achieved and invite members of the community who have not yet visited the garden. Over 100 people of all ages and backgrounds came together to participate in a variety of activities, including a bouncy castle, facepainting and a live band.

Denburn Coffee Morning

The residents of Denburn Court enjoyed their Macmillan Coffee morning on 30th September that was arranged by resident Lorraine Fordyce (pictured below). There was great support shown by the residents from donating prizes for the raffles, baking cakes and biscuits, serving coffee and even doing the washing up!

Lorraine had set herself the target of raising £237, enough money to pay for a Macmillan nurse for one day and the residents of Denburn Court totally smashed this target by raising a grand total of £659.15!

There was a great buzz in the common room at the coffee morning where residents had the choice of a lovely feast of sandwiches, cakes and tray bakes. Well done to all who supported this worthy cause!

Lorraine is planning on setting up a regular not-for-profit coffee morning in the common room so residents can come together and socialise in the winter months when people are less keen to head out in the cold. Lorraine is looking to host the first coffee morning in November, so please watch the notice board for more details nearer the time.

Lorraine's husband Alexander and another resident Ally Small are also starting up a weekly darts evening on a Monday evening beginning from Monday 7th November. There is also an Our Aberdeen taster session to take place in the common room on Wednesday 23rd October from 2pm -3.30pm. This is an informal drop in event with the theme being city centre memories.



**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**

Macmillan Cancer Support Funding Event at Mastrick Land

A coffee morning to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support was held at Mastrick Land (when?).

Around 60 people attended the event, organised by committee members, who enjoyed a morning/afternoon out with friends and family. Raffle prizes and cakes were donated the event by tenants and their friends, as well as donations from Tesco and Byron Bakery.

A total of £417.64 was raised. Well done to all involved!

Help & Support

Help and support is available to anyone concerned about the rising cost of living via our dedicated website: -

[Help with cost of living | Aberdeen City Council](#)

Times and places to collect emergency free food

[Times and places to collect emergency food | Aberdeen City Council](#)

Warm Spaces

[Warm Spaces | Aberdeen City Council](#)

Free period products

[Free Period Products | Aberdeen City Council](#)

Customer Service, Repairs, Housing Support Officers

Please telephone the call centre. Telephone: 03000 200 292



Housing Online Aberdeen City Council

- We have updated and improved our existing Housing Online Portal, allowing you to manage many aspects of your tenancy online at a time that suits you.

Visit www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/housingonline for more information.

This document is available in various formats and languages
Please call 01224 522839.

إذا كنت تريد الحصول على هذه النسخة بالخط العريض أو البصيرة أو الأشرطة الصوتية المدمجة أو كنت تود ترجمتها إلى لغة أخرى فالرجاء الاتصال بنا على الهاتف أدناه.

আপনি যদি এই দলিলটি ব্রেইলে, বড় ছাপার অক্ষরে বা শোনার জন্য সিডি, অথবা দলিলটি অন্য কোন ভাষায় অনূদিত চান তবে অনুগ্রহ করে নীচের টেলিফোন নম্বরে ফোন করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

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