

THE LOCHIL VIEW

West Fife

Fife Housing EMERGENCY

Fife Council declared a housing emergency in March 2024, and they were not alone. Many other councils and the Scottish Government have also declared a state of emergency.

There aren't enough homes for the people who need them. It's a problem across the public and private sectors and there's no quick fix to this situation. During 2024 the Council along with partners have been planning and acting on how to mitigate the long-term impact. Ochil View have been part of these discussions as Fife Housing Register partners.

There are lots of reasons why Fife Council got to the point of declaring the emergency and some of those reasons were for example:

- The programme to build new council homes was interrupted by the pandemic.
- The huge increase in building material costs and difficulty acquiring land, combined with a reduction in government funding.
- Since Covid and the cost-of-living crisis there has been a lot more pressure on homelessness services and all temporary accommodation is full.
- The ever-increasing cost of buying or renting private property.
- Many private landlords have stopped letting homes because of the rising cost of maintaining them to appropriate standards.
- The construction industry was heavily hit by the Covid pandemic, so there are fewer developers to build the new housing needed nationwide.

Housing Emergency Action Plan (HEAP)

Since declaring a housing emergency, the council and community planning partners - including organisations like Shelter, housing associations and private developers - have been working together to explore ways to address the issue.

The focus is on:

- maintaining the supply of affordable housing
- making the best use of existing properties
- enhancing housing access and preventing homelessness

You can read the HEAP in full on Fife Councils website at www.fife.gov.uk.



Estate Inspection UPDATE

Margaret Scott, Assistant Property Services Officer will carry out one full Estate Inspection on an annual basis, this will include picking up on communal estate issues such as gardens, dumped items and external repairs like gutters and boundary fencing etc. On a monthly basis Margaret will now closely monitor the close cleaning and landscaping maintenance contract to ensure the best service is provided for tenants, this process is in direct relation to feedback that we received through our Tenant Scrutiny Group.



PLEASE NOTE: Tenants can report communal repairs such as the above by calling direct on **01259 722 899** and pressing **option 2** alternatively you can email direct to **repairs@ochilviewha.co.uk**. If you would like to report any Estate issues such as dumped rubbish or dog fouling please call **01259 722 899 option 1** or alternatively email **housing@ochilviewha.co.uk**.

Tenancy Sustainment Support

Since April 2024 we have helped a total of 273 tenants with 373 different enquiries, ranging from benefit advice to help with energy costs.

Our tenants are better off by **£678,538.20**. This includes Housing Benefit of **£77,832.77** and Universal Credit of **£270,868.85**.

In your area this included helping 29 tenants leading to overall additional income of **£80,733.84** including **£5,332.08** Housing Benefit and **£50,546.75** Universal Credit Housing Costs payments and additional UC elements and other Benefits.

This is an average annual gain of **£2,783.93** for each tenant in your area that has been helped since April 2024.

If you would like information on Benefits etc, then please contact Margaret Hall, our Tenancy Sustainment Officer.



STAY INFORMED

Follow us on Facebook to get more local news and info

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✉ customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk

🌐 www.ochilviewha.co.uk

📘 ochilviewha

🐦 twitter.com/ViewOchil

Budget UPDATE

We are aiming to deliver a significant investment programme during the year. Below is a brief update on progress.

Total Investment Cost
£476,320

Kitchen Upgrades £4,600

Remaining properties being completed to addresses in Old Mill lane (1 property). Project will complete by March.

Windows / Door Upgrades £206,400

Tender has been awarded however start delayed to after April due to manufacturing timescales. Area covers Old Mill Lane.



Door Entry Upgrades £25,320

Work is due to be completed by March. Area includes Old Mill Lane.

Thermostatic mixer valve installations £240,000

Project on hold but due to resume in April. Covers all areas.

If you are due for any of the above upgrades, you will be contacted directly by our staff when we are ready to begin works.

If you have any questions on our investment plans, you can ask for Billy McCord or Margaret Scott.



We have seen an increase of dog fouling in Ochil View gardens & communal areas. This is unhygienic and can pose a health & safety risk.

As per your tenancy & pet permission agreement, dogs especially must be kept on a lead at all times when outside the property, dog faeces must be cleaned up immediately.

Being unaware your dog has fouled or not having a suitable bag is not a reasonable excuse.

Dog poo bags can be bought cheaply from a number of shops, we would suggest making sure you are stocked up, so you never run out!



Bin RECYCLING

We continue to visit our Estates on a regular basis inspecting communal areas and closes. It has become an ongoing issue in areas of rubbish not being disposed of correctly and bags being dumped, these are then ripped open by animals attracting vermin to the area along with causing an unsightly mess.

If others are filling your bin, you can purchase a padlock for your bin – ensuring this is removed for uplift day.



MEET, HEAT & EAT EVENTS

The Association held their annual Meet, Heat & Eat events in January 2025 with a total of over 80 households attending across all events.

The events were held in Alloa, Tullibody and High Valleyfield. Tenants enjoyed soup, teas, coffees and biscuits with presentations being heard from Clackmannanshire Home Energy Advice Team and Fife's Cosy Kingdom. We also had Citizens Advice telling us the help they could offer and Ochil View staff helping tenants with income maximisation, My Home and the Housing Perks App.

All those that came along left with a free mug full of goodies and all were entered into a prize draw with three households from each event winning a shopping voucher.

Here is a photo from our High Valleyfield event along with our lucky prize draw winners.



MS E GALLACHER



MS CAMPBELL



THISTLE

TENANT RISKS

Contents Insurance

Are you covered in your home?

As your landlord, Ochil View provide a buildings insurance policy. This covers the property and the fixtures and fittings in your home. We don't, however, cover your items or personal belongings. This is where you need to get contents insurance.

A contents insurance policy covers goods in your home, such as furniture, clothing and electrical items.

For example: Your toilet leaks onto your vinyl flooring and through to your kitchen below, causing damage to appliances, like your toaster. We would repair the leak and any ceiling damage, but not for the flooring or toaster. This is where your contents insurance would help.

We can recommend the Thistle Tenants Risks Home Contents Insurance Scheme. It is specifically designed for social housing tenants, has minimum requirements and flexible payment options. Visit their website at: <https://www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk/> for more information.

Homeswap (FIFE)

Homeswap is an online mutual exchange system that is a free service to all Ochil View tenants who are considering looking for a swap in Fife.

It allows you to register your own property advert and search online for other tenants looking to mutual exchange throughout Fife.

For more information on how the service works and to sign up for this service please go to <https://www.fifehousingregister.org.uk/homeswap/> or you can go to our website at www.ochilviewha.co.uk.

When creating your property advert don't forget to add photographs and a description about your home. The better the advert looks, the more attractive it is to other would-be-swappers.

If you require any advice or assistance about setting up your advert on Homeswap please do not hesitate to contact

Donna Phillips, Housing Services Assistant (Housing Options).



High Valleyfield YOUTH CLUBS

VALLEYFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE

p4-5 every Monday 5.00pm - 6.30pm
S1-S2 every Monday 7.00pm - 8.30pm
p6-7 every Tuesday 5.00pm - 6.30pm
S3+ every Tuesday 7.00pm - 8.30pm

find us on facebook
West Fife Villages youthwork



Fife community safety partnership

Ochil View Housing Association are working with the Fife Community Safety Partnership, the main aim of the partnership is to identify the breadth of provision across Fife and any subsequent gaps in service, to encourage partnership working and the sharing of best practice, and to consider any required response to emerging national and local trends within the home safety arena.



Along side Ochil View there are lots of other agencies involved such as SFRS, Police Scotland, Trading Standards, Health Visitors, Falls Team, Social Work, Fife Council Housing and Fife Centre for Equalities.

BULK UPLIFTS

Fife Council offers a free collection of bulk rubbish. This service is for oversized items that will not fit in a standard wheelie bin and it is limited to collection of up to **18 units per collection**. Each item is allocated a certain amount of units. You can arrange a bulk uplift by phoning **Fife Council on 03451 55 00 22**. You can also arrange through their website - <https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/bins-and-recycling/bulky-uplift-service>



Legionella safety in your property

Is your property going to be vacant for a period of a week or more? If it is, we strongly recommend on your return you flush the water system.

This means:-

- Running all taps and showers for a minimum of two minutes once a week.
- Flushing all the toilets on your return.
- It is also recommended that you clean and descale your shower head too!



SPRING into Wellbeing

The days are getting longer and there is a sense of renewal in the air. Spring has sprung, and it's the perfect time to refresh not just our homes, but also our health and wellbeing. After the winter months, our bodies and minds are ready for a boost. Here are a few tips to help you.

BOOST YOUR MIND

GET OUTDOORS: Soak up the sunshine and fresh air. A short walk in the park can improve your mood and reduce stress.

MINDFULNESS: Take a few minutes each day to practice mindfulness. More information can be found by visiting <https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/mindfulness-for-mental-wellbeing/>

SOCIALISE AND CONNECT: Reach out to friends and family. Social interaction is vital for our wellbeing.

GET ACTIVE

TRY SOMETHING NEW: Active Fife have a range of classes and activities from Yoga to Kayaking. More information can be found at <https://active.fife.scot> or by calling 01383 602393.

MAKE EXERCISE PART OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE: Set aside time to exercise and set realistic goals. If you are struggling to stay motivated exercise with friends or family.



BIRD FEEDING

We understand that feeding birds and encouraging wildlife can bring enjoyment, however when feeding birds you must be mindful that rats and mice are also present in most areas and are attracted to food sources.

This has been an increasing problem where food waste and scraps are being put out on the ground in gardens and communal areas which is attracting vermin and larger birds such as seagulls and pigeons.

Tenants/residents should bear this in mind and refrain from putting out any food waste.

CHOCOLATE cornflake cakes

Children will enjoy helping to make these ever-popular treats; ask them to stir in the cornflakes, but remind them to go gently so the cornflakes don't get crushed to a powder. Top them with sprinkles, mini marshmallows or mini eggs, if you wish.

INGREDIENTS

200g/7oz milk or dark chocolate, broken into small pieces

70g/2½oz smooth peanut butter

2 tbsp golden syrup

175g/6oz cornflakes

METHOD

Line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper cases.

Place the chocolate and peanut butter in a heatproof bowl. Set this over a pan of gently simmering water (do not let the base of the bowl touch the water) and leave to melt, stirring occasionally, until completely smooth. Stir in the golden syrup and then remove from the heat.

Add the cornflakes a handful at a time, stirring well between additions to ensure they're all coated.

Spoon the mixture into the paper cases, piling it up. Chill for 40–60 minutes, or until set.

RECIPE TIPS

This recipe is suitable for vegans if you use vegan cornflakes and chocolate, which are widely available. Some cornflakes are fortified with an animal derived product making them unsuitable for vegans.





Joanne Reid
Housing Services Officer



Grahame Phillips
Property Services Officer
(Reactive/Voids)



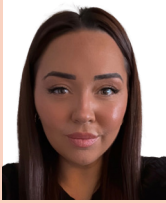
Billy McCord
Property Officer
(Compliance/Planned)



Andy Walls
Property Officer
(Reactive/Voids)



Margaret Hall
Tenancy Sustainment
Officer



Jade Murray
Tenant Engagement &
Communications Officer



Holly Brember
Assistant Housing
Services Officer



David Bishop
Assistant Housing Services
Officer (Arrears/Admin)



Tara Hamilton
Assistant Property Services
Officer (Reactive/Voids)



Margaret Scott
Assistant Property Services
Officer (Compliance/planned)

Joanne covers all our Fife areas.

Cosy Kingdom

Have you heard of Cosy Kingdom?

They offer free and impartial energy and debt advice service available to all tenants and homeowners across Fife. They can do this by telephone or through a home visit to help you stay warm, save energy and reduce your carbon emissions.

Visit their website at:
<https://www.cosykingdom.org.uk/>
for more information.



Fire Safety in Communal Closes

It is really important that your communal close is kept cleared of any items for fire safety reasons as it may obstruct the fire escape route.

- Do not prop open fire doors in communal areas
- Do not clutter the stairs, corridors and landings with personal items or things that can set fire easily
- Do not store prams, bicycles or mobility scooters in communal areas
- Do not store flammable materials in cupboards that have electrical circuits
- Do not smoke in communal areas

Repairs you are responsible for as a tenant

We will carry out nearly all repairs within your property, however there are a few things we are not responsible for.

These include things such as:-

- Changing light bulbs
- Changing toilet seats if they are broken
- Divisional fencing (fences between you and a neighbour)

More information can be found in your tenant's handbook!



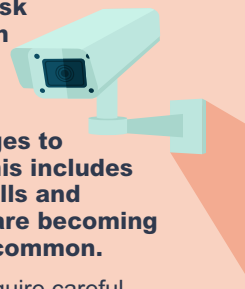
Please tell us you see anything in the communal areas that does not belong there and put any rubbish in bins provided.

Please remember that Ochil View also subsidises the cost for bulk uplifts in both Fife and Clackmannanshire.

Call us if you require further information!

Alterations and Improvements

You need to ask for permission should you be considering certain changes to your home; this includes video door bells and CCTV which are becoming increasingly common.



These items require careful consideration as they can capture images and sounds of your neighbours and members of the public meaning they come under Data Protection legislation. If you plan installing one of these systems, you must speak with us first and obtain approval to do so.

You should always seek advice on any changes you plan to make to your home. Staff are available to provide advice and guidance on what you can and cannot do and to help you through the permissions process.

You can also find useful information in our Tenants Handbook on Alterations, is available on our website.

Landscaping UPDATE

We are now in our Spring/ Summer phase of landscaping within our developments. You should have now noticed that the Landscape contractors have been starting to prepare our communal gardens for the summer months. If you have any issues that you would like to bring to our attention, please do not hesitate to contact us.

SUMMER MONTHS (APRIL TO OCTOBER)

- **Grass Cutting** - Every 10 working days, except in very inclement weather conditions.
- **Grass Edging** - Every 10 working days plus annual edge reforming (not including naturalised areas).
- **Shrub Pruning** - Once or twice per year, depending on species.
- **Weed Control** - As required.
- **Hedge Trimming** - 2 times per year
- **Litter Picking** - Every 10 working days



Contractors should be showing ID

Please remember that any of the Association's contractors that attend your home should be able to show you photographic ID.

If you are unsure, please contact us on 01259 722899 and we can verify if they have been instructed on behalf of the Association.



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE