

THE OCHIL VIEW

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INTRODUCING OUR NEW CHAIRPERSON

The Association is pleased to announce that Jim Savage was elected as Chairperson following the Association's AGM last month. Jim has served as Vice-Chairperson for the past year and succeeds Margaret Baxter who retired as Chairperson after her 5-year period in office ended in September.

Jim and the Board continue to focus on the Association's goal to help meet Clackmannanshire's urgent housing needs, as well as continuing to ensure that Ochil View's properties are maintained to a high standard, and that tenants' views are at the heart of all decision-making.

Jim is a retired solicitor who has lived in Clackmannanshire since 1985. He has worked in the civil and criminal courts and has worked closely with Social Work Services around the needs of children and families. He has been closely associated with Ochil View Housing Association since its inception in 1989.

Commenting on his appointment, Jim said:

"I am delighted to be elected as Chairperson and am looking forward to leading the Association in its work in the local community. Ochil View plays an important part in delivering new homes and providing good-quality housing. I look forward to working with the Board and staff to continue to make a difference in the area.

On behalf of the Board, I would also like to thank Margaret Baxter, who has led the Association through some interesting and difficult times in the past 5 years, for her dedication and commitment to the role"

Anne Smith, Chief Executive, said: *"We are all incredibly grateful to Margaret for her voluntary service over the last five years. Following the end of her 5-year tenure as Chairperson, we are delighted to have Jim as our new Chairperson going forward – his knowledge of the local community and area will be key to helping us with driving forward with our investment strategy, whether that is in new housing, improvement to existing homes, or improving the energy efficiency of our homes."*



Jim Savage
Chairperson

Scottish Housing Day

On the 18th September, it was the annual Scottish Housing Day with the theme this year being 'Homes for Life'. To celebrate the day, Ochil View invited our tenants aged 50+ along to The Gate to share information and support on keeping them happy in their homes in later life. This included services such as adaptations, tenancy sustainment and housing options. We also welcomed external groups including Tech Enabled Care and Clacks Third Sector Interface along to share what they do. On top of all that, we had time to chat with tenants over a sandwich and a cuppa!



Over 55 households came along, which was a fantastic turnout, and it was a very busy room!

Thank you to everyone who attended, we hope you found it useful, and we look forward to planning for next year's!

Budget Update

During 2024/25, we are aiming to deliver a significant investment programme as shown below.



Kitchen Upgrades
£533,000



Windows / Door Upgrades
£275,000



Bathroom Upgrades
£181,000



Door Entry Upgrades
£109,000



Thermostatic mixer valve installations
£240,000

Staff are working on delivery of each of these projects before the end of the financial year and will contact tenants directly when works are ready to commence.

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

Total Investment
£1,338,000



Adaptations to your home

Every year, we apply to the Scottish Government for funding to allow us to adapt tenant's homes for our properties in Clackmannanshire and West Fife. This service allows us to fit key-safes, grabrails, bannisters and showers.



After considerable delay, we have now received funding from the Scottish Government towards our medical adaption budget although our allocation is far less than we had hoped for. This is not unexpected and we know many landlords are in a similar position. As funding is now in place, staff are working through our waiting list for adaptations based on priority and date received.

We continue to take any new adaptation requests and these will be progressed in order of date received provided we have funds available.

It is important to stress that we do not have funds to undertake all requests on our waiting list and combined with a backlog of requests from last year due to receiving a higher level of requests than available funding, this means that considerable delays to complete works will remain.

Remember, if you are finding difficulties with your mobility, we may be able to assist.

You do not always need a referral from Occupational Therapy for small adjustments and we can sometimes undertake work such as fitting grabrails and handrails. We can also help you contact the occupational therapy team for more complicated referrals.

Please note we may require you to fill out a Vat exemption form, if this is required, we will advise you and get you to sign this. **If we do receive it back then the adaptation may be delayed.**

If you would like to speak to someone about adaptations, please contact us on 01259 722899.

Alterations and Improvements

If you want to make certain alterations to your home, you need to ask for permission, this includes video/ring door bells and CCTV which are a common request.



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.

Remember to always seek advice on changes you plan to make to your home. Our staff are on hand to provide advice on what you can and cannot do, or you can find useful information in our Tenants Handbook on Alterations which is available on our website.

Clackmannanshire Economic Regeneration Trust (CERT)

CERT is a charitable organisation established to support the economic and social wellbeing of those who live in work in Clackmannanshire. The service is available for anyone aged between 16-67.



CERT

One of our residents was recently referred for support by CERT. They initially were reserved and unsure about getting involved, however, through engagement with CERT the resident now has a copy of their birth certificate which they have not had in years, they are now in receipt of benefits that they are entitled too and getting involved with the courses on offer for free.

They have been involved in many different courses to get them outdoors and to pick up other skills which has helped them getting into the community, the most recent course they have been involved in is a 4 week course for employability.

CERT is also assisting the resident to open a bank account and to apply for a driver's licence. All this would have been difficult for the resident without the support of CERT and they say they have enjoyed getting involved with the service and learning new things through the courses available.

To find out more email info@clacksregen.org.uk or call 01259 272017



HOW ARE WE DOING?

We saw some upheaval for repairs in the early part of the year through having to change our contractor but performance levels have since improved. Here is how we performed for the year April 2024 to June 2024:

WHERE WE PERFORMED WELL:

- average length of time to complete emergency repairs: **1 hour 17 minutes**
- average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs: **5.07 days**
- repairs completed on target: **95.11%**
- reactive repair appointments kept: **100%**
- (New) tenants satisfied with condition of home on taking up tenancy: **100%**
- current tenancy arrears: **2.73%**
- % of annual lets to homeless applicants: **30%**
- average time to let a house: **25.28 days**
- rent collected as a % of rent due: **99.93%**
- Stage 1 complaints resolved within timescale: **96.88%**
- Stage 2 complaints resolved within timescale: **100%**
- positive comments from service users: **200**

WHERE WE DIDN'T DO SO WELL:

- emergency repairs response times: **97.72%**
- repairs completed right first time: **90.05%**
- tenants satisfied with the repairs service: **89%**
- planned maintenance works v programme: **78.32%**

Questions or comments? Contact Andrew Gibb, Director of Property Services or Linda McLaren, Director of Housing Services.

COMPLAINTS & POSITIVE COMMENTS

Here is how we did for the year April 2024 to June 2024:

FOR 32 STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS WE RESOLVED

96.88% WITHIN TIMESCALE (4 DAYS)

FOR 2 STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS WE RESOLVED

100% WITHIN TIMESCALE (20 DAYS)

We value all complaints and comments as they help us deliver services better. For the year to date, we identified 34 instances where we could learn from complaints, and these were used to discuss improvements with both staff and contractors to try and eliminate future errors.

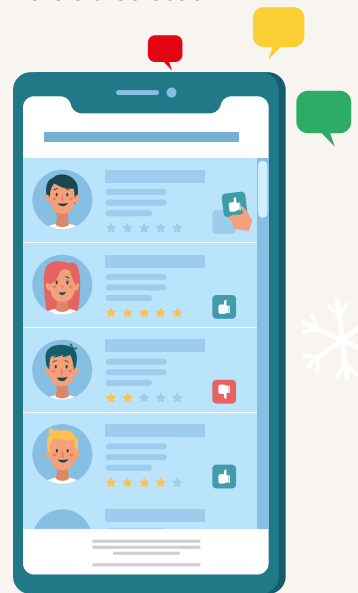
We have a system for tenants to share positive experiences with Ochil View Housing and we continue to receive lovely comments. Here's a selection:

"All works were done well and the contractor explained everything that was wrong"

"Very quick and efficient service from time of reporting problem to having it repaired"

"I was very satisfied by all the work that was carried out the past few weeks."

You can share your positive experiences of Ochil View anytime. Just give us a call, chat to a staff member or pop into our office.



Questions or comments: Contact Andrew Gibb, Director of Property Services.

Important Changes to Our Allocations Policy

We have recently consulted with applicants, tenants and partners and have reviewed our Allocation Policy which was approved by our Board of Management.

An important change to this is that if an applicant refuses 3 reasonable offers of accommodation, then we will suspend their These Homes registration for a period of 3 months. We would therefore encourage applicants to ensure they read the property advert thoroughly to ensure that the property is suitable for their needs.

The full policy can be found on our website or directly on the link - https://www.ochilviewha.co.uk/uploaded/portal/secure_files/allocation_policy_2024.pdf



MONEY MATTERS

If you would like further information on any of the benefits mentioned please contact Margaret, Hall our Tenancy Sustainment Officer on 01259 722899 or Margaret.hall@ochilviewha.co.uk

“Margaret was so helpful and advised me on what help could be available to me and my situation.”



Universal Credit Migration:

Transitional Protection if you receive a Migration Notice letter



What is Transitional Protection?

Transitional protection helps with your move to Universal Credit. If eligible, this protection means you can get a transitional protection payment added to your Universal Credit entitlement if you receive more from your previous tax credits or benefits.



Your current benefit

When you may get your letter:

- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance From September 2024
- Employment Support Allowance (ESA) only From September 2024 to October 2025
- Employment Support Allowance with Housing Benefit From September 2024 to October 2025

If you're unsure whether you're affected by migration, you can check the government website or contact DWP.

There is support available to help you with the migration process. This includes help with making a claim, understanding your entitlements, and managing your money.

For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transitional-protection-if-you-receive-a-migration-notice-letter>

Winter Heating payments

(Previously the Cold Weather Payment)

The Scottish Government replaced the UK Government's Cold Weather Payment of £25 for every 7 day period of very cold weather with a new payment of £58.75. Winter heating payment is paid annually to those low-income households currently eligible.

Qualifying week The next qualifying week is 4 November to 10 November 2024. You will get Winter Heating Payment automatically if you are in receipt of an income related benefit such as Universal Credit.

Winter Heating Payment will be paid from December 2024 and will be £58.



Winter Fuel Payment for Pensioners



Scottish Government recently announced that the Winter Fuel Payment in Scotland will be means-tested this winter. This follows a similar change to eligibility in England and Wales that have delayed the introduction of Scotland's replacement benefit, the Pension Age Winter Heating Payment (PAWHP) until next year.

For this year, those born before 23 September 1958 could receive either £200 or £300 to help towards their heating bills. Individuals must also be in receipt of one of the following:

Pension Credit, Universal Credit, Income Support, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit.

The number of Pension Credit claims being made each week has more than doubled since the government announced changes to the winter fuel payment on the 09/09/2024

Please contact Margaret Hall for a Pension Credit benefit check to see if you're eligible.



Further information and help with energy bills, including details on other types of support that tenants may be eligible for to help with energy bills, can be found at: mygov.scot

Warm Home Discount

Reopens in October 2024

You can get £150 off your electricity bill if you qualify for the Warm Home Discount scheme.

You do not need to apply if you get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit. You'll automatically get a letter telling you about the discount if you're eligible.

Otherwise, you'll need to apply directly to your energy supplier.

You might be eligible if all of the following apply:

- your energy supplier is part of the scheme
- You (or your partner) get certain means-tested benefits or tax credits
- Your name (or your partner's) is on the electricity bill
- Your electricity supplier may have extra eligibility criteria.
- They'll also tell you which benefits mean you are eligible.
- This is known as being in the 'broader group'. If you're eligible

Your electricity supplier will apply the discount to your bill. The money is not paid to you.



Pensioner Disability Payment

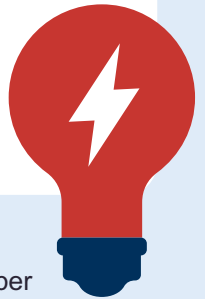
Which will replace Attendance Allowance, is due to begin in August 2024, with full rollout scheduled for 2025.

From 21 October, Pension Age Disability Payment – the replacement for Attendance Allowance - will be piloted in Argyll & Bute, Highland, Aberdeen City, Orkney and Shetland. The benefit will become available in 13 more local authority areas on 24 March next year before becoming available across Scotland from April 2024.

Pensioners in receipt of Attendance Allowance don't need to take any action as their awards will be automatically moved from the DWP Attendance Allowance to Social Security Scotland's Pensioner Disability Payment.

This will happen in phases, with the first expected to be transferred in early 2025.

It is not means-tested and is worth between £290 and £434 a month depending on the needs of the person who gets it.



Energy Advice

Energy advice is available from the HEAT team at Clackmannanshire Council and Cosy Kingdom Fife Council.

They can offer advice and support by telephone or through a home visit to help you stay warm, save energy and reduce your carbon emissions.

The friendly energy advisors can help you find practical and affordable ways to save energy, understand your gas and electricity bills and tariffs, support you in dealing with suppliers, advise on gas and electricity utility debt and help apply for grants and schemes such as the Warm Home Discount.

- ✓ Clearing or reducing fuel debt
- ✓ Reducing energy debt repayments (for debt that remains)
- ✓ Helping vulnerable households apply for the Warm Home Discount
- ✓ Giving advice on improving the energy efficiency of homes
- ✓ Analysing household energy usages
- ✓ Providing tailored energy saving tips so households avoid wasteful energy use
- ✓ Assisting households to switch to cheaper energy deals



The energy price cap

The energy price cap for the period from October 1 to December 31, 2024 is £1,717 per year for a typical household in Great Britain that uses electricity and gas and pays by direct debit. This is a 10% increase from the previous price cap, and is expected to add around £12 per month to an average bill.

The energy price cap is the maximum amount that energy suppliers can charge for each unit of energy and standing charge for those on a standard variable tariff. The price cap is reviewed and updated every three months, and the actual rates charged depend on a number of factors, including where you live, how you pay your bill, and the type of meter you have.

Some other things to know about the energy price cap include:

There is a separate cap for prepayment tariffs, which is reviewed independently of the standard variable tariff cap.

The cap is based on a range of factors, including wholesale cost of energy, network costs, policy costs, operating costs, and prepayment meter costs.

The standing charge is a cost that is included in each electricity and gas bill, and is set by your supplier.

ENERGY ADVICE FOR OUR TENANTS LIVING IN FIFE
www.cosykingdom.org.uk

ENERGY ADVICE FOR OUR TENANTS LIVING IN CLACKMANNANSHIRE
www.clacks.gov.uk/housing/energyadvice

If you would like further information on any of the benefits or grants mentioned please contact Margaret Hall our Tenancy Sustainment Officer on 01259 722899 or Margaret.hall@ochilviewha.co.uk

School Clothing Grant and Free School Meals

Applications for the 2024/25 school year will close on the 31st of December 2024.

If your child attends primary, special or secondary schools, you may still qualify for a school clothing grant.

FOR OUR TENANTS LIVING IN CLACKMANNANSHIRE
www.clacks.gov.uk/learning/schoolclothinggrants/

FOR OUR TENANTS LIVING IN FIFE
www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/education2/schools-in-fife/free-school-meals-and-school-clothing-grants



Our Summer Success!

We had a fantastic turnout at the first ever Clacks Community Carnival during the summer!

The event was led by Ochil View Housing, in partnership with Clacks Council, Kingdom and Paragon Housing Associations and others. There was plenty of fun and games on offer, including arts and crafts, a tombola and a very busy face painter!

Over 20 local groups and services also came along to share the work they do helping in the community. Around 150 people attended and, as you can see from the pictures, everyone had a great time.

Chris McShane, our Tenant Engagement & Communications Officer said "Thank you to everyone who came along and helped make the day a great success. We worked hard organising the event and it was great to see so many come through the door. It also highlighted the tremendous range of local initiatives set up to support people in the area."

In fact, it was such a success, we're doing it all again next year! 25th July 2025 – get the date in your diary!

If you have any ideas for next year's event, or would like to donate any unwanted books, toys or gifts for it, we would love to hear from you. Just contact Chris McShane at: chris.mcshane@ochilviewha.co.uk or call on 01259 727 473.



Tenant Engagement Roundup

Chris McShane, Tenant Engagement & Communications Officer on 01259 727 473 or email: tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk

We've had a busy last few months when it comes to tenant engagement!

As well as the summer carnival and Scottish Housing Day, we have been liaising with tenants in other ways to ensure we continue delivering the best possible services.

The Tenant Scrutiny Group is continuing its work on reviewing our current Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. As well as looking at what we currently do in terms of identifying and addressing ASB, the group have been visited by Kingdom Housing to hear their approach and looked at our communication channels around this subject. We look forward to sharing the tenants' findings and any recommendations in due course.

The group meet monthly in our office over lunchtime and are an independent body who decide which areas of our service they would like to review. If you are interested in learning more about the group, we would love to hear from you. **You can call Chris McShane as per above.**

Beyond the Scrutiny Group, we have also been consulting with those on our Interested Register of Tenants. These are tenants who are keen to participate in key areas of work we are undertaking. We sent a short survey those on the list to gather their thoughts on the current Tenant Engagement Strategy, which is under review. They shared what they thought of the layout and content of the Strategy, as well as ideas for us to explore in the future around tenant participation.

Again, you can get in touch with Chris as per above if you would like to learn more about this register.

We have also been gathering tenant opinion on the Reactive Maintenance Policy, which we will share in due course. Lastly, in early December, tenants will receive the information on the 2025-26 rent and the opportunity to share their thoughts on what we are proposing, so look out for that coming to you soon.



Biennial tenancy visits

Your housing team will shortly begin visiting tenants over a 2-year period. The reason for the visits is to offer housing related support, ensure our tenancy records are up to date and to offer digital assistance. This is also a chance to meet your housing team and gives you an opportunity to ask questions about your housing circumstances.

We intend to stagger these visits over a 2-year period and some newer tenants will have already been visited.



XL Bully legislation

It is a criminal offence to own or possess an XL Bully dog without a Certificate of Exemption.

It is also an offence to:

- have an XL Bully in public without a lead and muzzle
- abandon an XL Bully or let it stray
- breed or breed from an XL Bully
- sell, give away or rehome an XL Bully

All dogs should be kept on a lead and muzzled in public. The safeguards applied to XL bully dogs are also required to be maintained within all our communal areas including communal garden areas.

From 31st July 2024, it will be illegal to own an XL bully type dog in Scotland without an exemption certificate or having applied for an exemption certificate to own that dog. It is also important to add that third party public liability insurance is also required.

We require all our tenants who have an XL Bully dog to provide the exemption certificate to us.

Fire Safety In Your Home

Here are a few tips to ensure your safety and reduce risk of fires in the household.

- Switch off/unplug electrical appliances not in use (phone chargers, air fryers, slow cookers etc)
- Ensure cigarettes are stubbed out correctly and always empty ashtrays.
- Never leave open flames unattended and extinguish before bed or leaving the property.
- Do not charge mobile phones laptops etc whilst asleep and never have under your pillow.
- When using or charging laptops or gaming devices place on a hard surface to allow the device to vent properly.

These are only a few of the suggestions by Scotland Fire Service. For more information check out their website www.firescotland.gov.uk

We also have safety advice available in our tenant handbooks. You can access this via your My Home account or via our website. www.ochilviewha.co.uk

Our Green-Fingered Winner!

We ran our Annual Garden Competition this year and the winner was Peter Johnstone at Millers Lade Avenue in Sauchie!

As you can see from the pictures, Peter has been working hard producing flowers and veg in the communal garden area at his home.

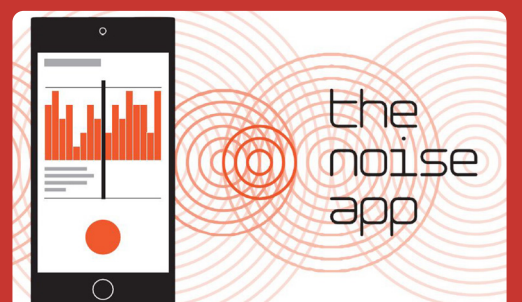
Peter said:

“I wasn't too well at the start of the year, my friend and my neighbour looked after me during this time. Fortunately, I have still been able to get out into the garden and share the flowers and vegetables that I have produced. It is great to win the voucher as it will help me finish the pots that I have been attaching to the fences.”

Well done Peter!

Noise App

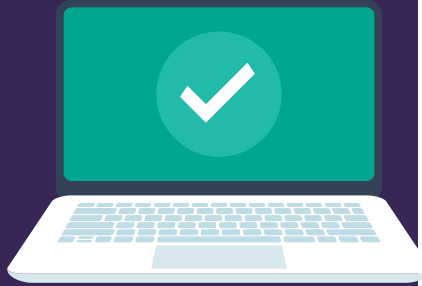
The Noise App is simple to use and free to download, it allows complainants to take short recordings of noise that are excessive or at unreasonable times and report this easily to us. Recordings can assist with gathering evidence to confirm anti-social behaviour has taken place. If you are experiencing anti-social behaviour, please contact your Housing Services Officer to discuss your issues and access to The Noise App. Staff are able to assist with showing new users how to use The Noise App.



STAFF NEWS

My Home

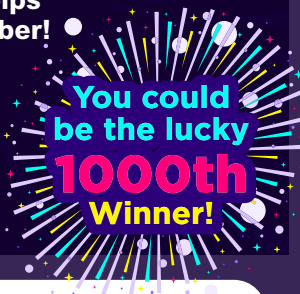
Our online tenant portal is up and running and is available 24/7 through our website (clicking on the green 'My Home' link).



My Home can be used to update your contact details and also amend occupant details. Many of your important tenancy documents are available on My Home and can be accessed at any time. The 'Useful forms' section is available on My Home and includes Pet Permission and Alterations & Adaptations amongst others.

Our digital champions are available to assist with any help or advice needed to get you set up and started, please contact us if you would like help with this. We are able to help you with this in the office or at your home.

We are edging ever closer to having 1000 Ochil View tenants signed up to My Home and to celebrate the milestone, we will be offering a £50 SHOPPING VOUCHER to the lucky tenant who helps us reach this magical number! There has never been a better time to start using your My Home service. If you haven't set up on My Home yet, don't delay.



Have your circumstances changed? Need to consider downsizing/upsizing?

These Homes is available to applicants looking for a property in the Clackmannanshire area - registrations can be completed online at www.thesehomes.com

As a tenant of Ochil View HA you can consider a Mutual Exchange with another tenant of a Registered Social Landlord or ourselves. This would involve property and tenancy checks by the landlords involved and would also depend on the circumstances of each party. House Exchange (www.houseexchange.org.uk) allows you to register your property to connect with other tenants who are also considering a Mutual Exchange - call us and speak to your Housing Team for more information.



House Exchange

Andy Walls

I am Andy Walls and I have been lucky enough to join Ochil View Housing Association as a Property Services Officer whilst one of our permanent staff is on Maternity. I have worked in social housing for some 30 years and have gained great experience in Maintenance and Repairs. I am keen to learn from Ochil View as well as provide some of my own work experience so as to keep providing our tenants and customers with a first class service.

Outside of work I enjoy walking and I am a member of the Glenrothes Ramblers association as well as being a supporter of my local football team.



Billy McCord

As mentioned in our last newsletter, Billy joined us to cover maternity leave for another member of the team dealing with reactive repairs and voids. We had a reshuffle internally and Billy is now acting as Property Services Officer (Compliance / Planned) covering our investment projects, medical adaptations and all our compliance areas.



Baby boom at Ochil View

Introducing the latest two additions to the Ochil view family.

Meet Joni and Otis.

Vicki Brown, Property Services Officer (compliance and planned), welcomed twins Joni and Otis Ramsay to the world on 06th September. Mum and babies are doing well.





Community Safety

We work with partner agencies – Police, Council, Safety groups etc. to share information, concerns and issues and work towards creating safer communities for everyone.

Incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour should be reported as this allows us to record, investigate and take further action where required. Should you have any concerns about safety in your area or wish to discuss this then please contact your Housing Team.

Please be aware that we can only deal with matters relating to a breach of tenancy. Personal disagreements, clash of lifestyles, general household noise may not be deemed as Anti-Social Behaviour and would require a level of tolerance from all parties involved.

Getting involved in Neighbourhood Watch can bring a number of benefits to your local community, if you wish to start a community Neighbourhood Watch scheme then please contact us for advice, we would be happy to assist with this.



Permission is required for any 'Ring' doorbell style camera's and must also be requested before installing CCTV, this can be found under 'Useful Forms' in My Home.

Any faulty street lights should be reported to the Local Authority, this can normally be done online. Any issues with close lighting (lamps out, not coming on as expected) should be reported to Ochil View HA.

Housing Perks

Ochil View tenants who have signed up to the Housing Perks app have collectively saved over £600 already! The app is a fantastic, free and easy-to-use tool that can help you make savings in your shopping - perfect as we are coming up to Christmas! Not only that, but you can shop at many of the top retailers should you be looking for that special festive gift. Shops available include Primark, Tesco, Argos, B&M and Asda, as well as the likes of Google Play.

To get started, all you need to do is find Housing Perks on your phone - either by going into your app store or through your internet browser. Once installed, you will need your tenant reference number and there is an easy-to-follow guide within the app to get you started.

When you know what you are spending at the shop, simply request a voucher on your phone for a discount - show this at the till and start saving!

Staff here at Ochil View would also be happy to help you get started, if you are unsure. Just give us a call on 01259 722 899 and someone will assist you. You can also pop into our office and we will get it set up for you.

Neighbourhood Project

In the summer, we ran an exciting new project, asking tenants to share their ideas for how we can help improve their neighbourhood. The best ideas would win funding from our landscaping contractor, idVerde towards the project. We received some fantastic, innovative ideas and our main winner was Steven Wallace from Blairhall. Here, he shares what he proposed and how it has progressed since receiving the support.

"I had the idea of creating a communal planting area for the flats at South Avenue. The idea is a 'Seed to Plate' project, with a focus on recycling everything we can in the garden area, helping to reduce our carbon footprint.

We consulted with tenants in the block on my proposal and received unanimous positive feedback. With the funding of £350 from idVerde, we have been able to buy items such as topsoil, compost and gardening tools.

Work has progressed well, with all the plots built and the young seedlings protected from the upcoming winter. From next year, we will be growing a broad range of vegetables.

I've had some help from a couple of tenants, but it would be great if more could join me with developing this garden project over the coming months as work progresses.

If anyone is interested, please send me an email at: wpamsteve@yahoo.co.uk, quoting 'South Avenue Vegetable Plots'."

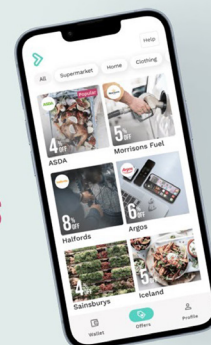


Well done Steve, the pictures look great and we can't wait to revisit you in the spring to see how things are going!



HOUSING PERKS

SAVE MONEY ON ESSENTIALS



Ochil View's *Christmas* Corner

Air-fryer mince pies

Ingredients

- 500g shortcrust pastry, ready-made or homemade
- plain flour, for dusting
- 350g mincemeat (vegetarian, if necessary)
- 1 egg
- icing sugar, for dusting

Method

STEP 1

Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface until roughly ½cm thick. Use an 8-10cm round biscuit cutter to stamp out as many discs as you can, then reroll the offcuts and cut out more, using up as much of the pastry as possible.

STEP 2

Spoon 1 tbsp mincemeat into the middles of half the pastry discs. Stamp out small stars (or other festive shapes) from the middles of half of the remaining pastry discs and set aside.

STEP 3

Beat the egg and brush lightly around the edge of each mincemeat-topped pastry disc. Place the lids on top – some with the stamped-out stars and some without. Brush a little egg wash over each pie, then stick the leftover stars on top of the plain pastry pies. Brush the stars with egg wash, too. Poke a little hole in the top of the covered pies to let steam escape during cooking.

STEP 4

Either use a fork to seal the edges of the pies by pressing around the edge, or make a small, neat crimp by pinching with your fingers. Arrange the pies on a plate or baking tray and chill for at least 30 mins. Will keep frozen for up to two months.

STEP 5

Heat the air-fryer to 180C. Lay a square of baking parchment in the air-fryer basket, sit the pies on top, cooking as many as you'd like at a time. Cook for 8-10 mins, then turn the mince pies and cook for a further 2-3 mins, or 13-15 mins from frozen. The pies should be golden brown and steaming hot. Leave to cool for 5 mins, then dust with icing sugar and serve. Will keep in an airtight tin for up to two days.



Christmas budgeting & Housing Perks



Christmas is fast approaching and it can be easy to overspend at this time of year, it is important to ensure that priority bills including your rent, are paid. There is no excuse for not paying your rent and we will continue to pursue tenants who don't pay.

Please contact your Housing Services Officer to discuss your circumstances, we are able to help and assist and can look at a budget plan for you.

Should you be struggling financially then advice can also be sought from Citizens Advice Bureau. We also have our own in house Tenancy Sustainment Officer – Margaret Hall, who can assist with welfare benefit queries and income maximisation.

Help is also available at:

<https://www.stepchange.org/how-we-help/debt-advice-scotland.aspx>

<https://moneyadvice.scot/>

The Housing Perks App can be worthwhile helping to save money by offering up to 20% discounts with vouchers that can be used with a number of retailers.



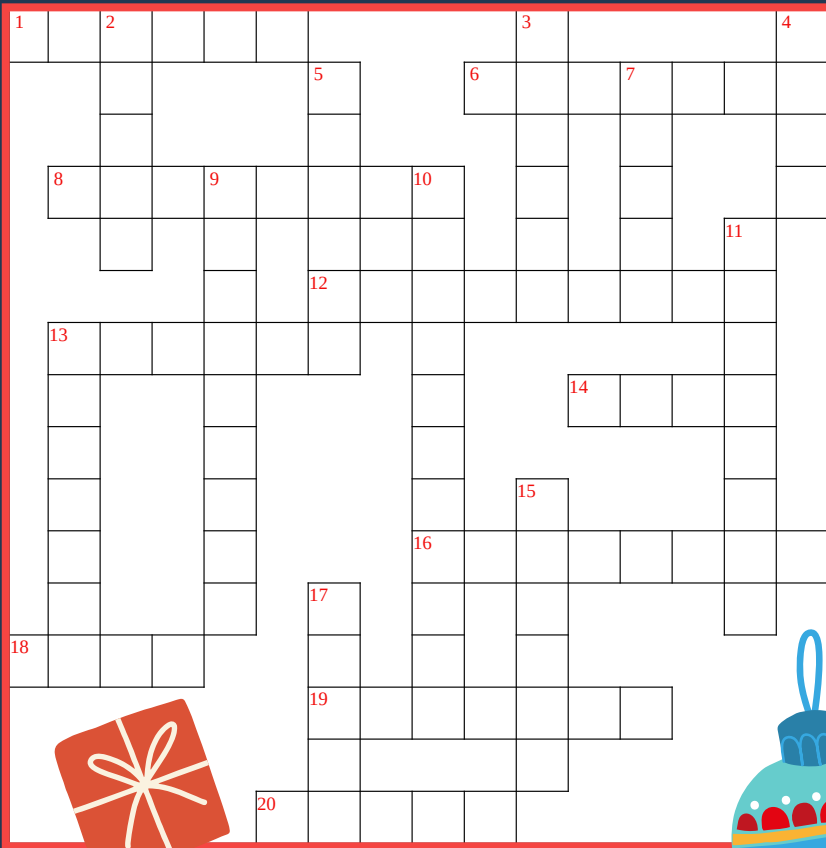
Keep your home safe this *Christmas*

It won't be long before Santa makes his annual arrival, to ensure you have the best and safest Christmas possible see below tips for keeping yourself and your ho ho home safe this Christmas:

- Never leave cooking unattended and keep decorations and other fire risks away from open flames
- Keep candles away from Christmas trees, wrapped presents, decorations and other flammable objects. Consider using flameless LED candles as a safer alternative
- Ensure Fairy lights are bought from a reputable supplier and ensure they are in good working order before use
- Always unplug fairy lights and other electrical decorations when you leave the house or go to bed
- Avoid leaving presents in unattended vehicles and ensure they are not easily visible from the street, preferably store them away somewhere safe
- Think twice about what you post on social media. Avoid details of expensive presents, do not advertise if you are going away for the festive period and leaving your home unoccupied
- If you are going away over the Christmas period, make sure your home is left secure. If possible, ask a trusted neighbour or friend to keep an eye out
- Even if you are just popping out, always lock your doors
- Secure any sheds or outbuildings, as they may store tools that can be used to break in to your home.



Our Christmas Crossword Challenge!



ACROSS

- 1 Coldest season
- 6 Gift
- 8 Hung over the fireplace
- 12 Striped sweet
- 13 Santa's ride
- 14 Green Christmas decoration
- 16 Rudolph and friends
- 18 Frozen rain
- 19 Lead reindeer
- 20 Santa's helpers

DOWN

- 2 _____ Pole
- 3 Famous snowman
- 4 Tree topper
- 5 Green Christmas thief
- 7 Jolly gift giver
- 9 Gift giving holiday
- 10 Treat used to build miniature houses
- 11 Christmas month
- 13 Carrot-nosed figure
- 15 _____ Bells
- 17 Christmas song



Time for some festive fun!

We have created a Christmas Crossword for tenants to complete and we have a fantastic festive voucher worth £50 on offer to one lucky entrant!

Once completed, you can enter by:

Sending the completed crossword to us by post or pop it into our office at: Ochil House, Marshall, Alloa, FK10 1AB.

Tell us your answers by email to:
tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk

Take a picture of your completed crossword and send it with your details to: **07874 864 323**.

Competition closes on 1st December. Good luck!

Christmas Competition

The countdown to Christmas is officially on and we have fantastic festive boxes to give away to two young Ochil Viewers! These Christmas Eve boxes will be packed full of toys, games and treats and to be in with a chance of winning, we want to see some colourful creative creations!

We are looking for youngsters to provide us with a Christmas picture - it can be anything, as long as it's festive themed!

There are plenty ways to share your entries - you can pop it in the post to us, hand it into the office or send by email to: tenantengagement@ochilviewha.co.uk. You can also send it via a text to: **07874 864 323**.

Competition closes on Monday 9th December and our two lucky winners will be contacted shortly after. You must be 10 or under to enter!

Good luck!



Christmas Holidays

At Christmas and New Year, we will be closed on the following dates:

Wednesday 25th,
Thursday 26th
& Friday 27th
December 2024



Wednesday 1st,
Thursday 2nd
& Friday 3rd
January 2025



**OFFICE WILL RE - OPEN ON
MONDAY 6TH JANUARY 2025.**

Please remember that you can continue to report emergency repairs through this period to either QAPM or City Technical.

Call our office on **01259 722899** and follow the instructions to be put through to a specific trade - electrician, plumber, joiner, or heating engineer.

Have a wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year from all at Ochil View Housing Association.

Our 2024 Annual General Meeting On 12th September, Ochil View held its 35th Annual General Meeting at the Dunmar House Hotel in Alloa.

The Chairperson, Margaret Baxter, gave a short talk about her time as Chairperson at Ochil View and confirmed that she would be standing down following a period of five years in post. Over this period there have been in several challenges, including Covid rules, regulations and restrictions, office closures, Board meetings being held remotely and the retirement of the Association's former Chief Executive – so it has been a busy time for staff and Board Members. However she was pleased that she leaves on a positive note, with a new staff structure in place, improving performance in many areas and with the Association continuing to add new homes every year to its stock of houses for social rent.

Phil Morrice of Auditors Alexander Sloan then provided an overview of the Association's financial position and accounts, and confirmed that Alexander Sloan were of the opinion, as auditors, that the financial statements gave a true and fair view.

Following this, Anne Smith, Chief Executive, reported on elections to the Board of Management, and confirmed that there were 6 candidates standing for 9 places and, as a result, all of those standing for election or re-election would be duly elected. The composition of the Board for 2024/2025 was then duly confirmed as:

Margaret Baxter, Jim Savage, Susan Mackay, Lynne Brierley, Adam Brown, Tom Brown, Ashley Buxton, Graham Collie, Sandy Hunter, Eileen McKinsley, Teresa McNally and Shirley Ritchie.

Finally, Alexander Sloan were re-appointed as auditors for 2024/2025.

Following the meeting, guest speaker Professor Kim McKee of the University of Stirling gave a detailed and interesting presentation about sustainability, accessibility in housing and the ongoing work that the University is doing in this area.

Have your details changed?

It is important to let us know if you have recently changed your mobile number or email address as it means we will be able to contact you with any important information about your tenancy, as well as making sure we can carry out necessary checks at your home, such as electrical safety.

If you have recently changed, or you are unsure if we have the correct information, there are plenty ways to let us know. The easiest way is to simply log on to your My Home account and update there.

You can also do it by giving us a call on **01259 722 899** or emailing us at: customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk

Office Opening Hours

We have made some slight changes to our office opening hours recently:

Monday's, Tuesday's and Thursday's, we are open from 9am to 5pm.

On **Wednesday's**, we are open from 12.30pm until 5pm.

On **Friday's**, we are open from 9am until 3pm.

Outwith these hours, you can still call our main number on 01259 722 899 to report any emergency repairs. Just follow the instructions on the call to speak to the right person.



Important information

Gas servicing and electrical safety checks

Annual Gas Safety checks are carried out every year by our gas contractor City Technical services. It is very important to give access to your home for these checks to be carried out. If we are unable to access your home by the anniversary date, then we may take further action to disconnect your gas or arrange to force access to your property if the meter is internal.

Electrical safety checks are carried out every five years and currently being carried out by RB Grant Electrical. Like the gas servicing it is important to allow access to your home to allow these checks to be carried out. If we are unable to gain access by the anniversary date, then we will arrange to force entry to your home for these works to be carried out.

These checks are essential and by not allowing access you may be putting yourself and other residents of your home at risk.

If the appointment made is not suitable, just give Leona a call on **01259 722899** as there is normally plenty time to re-arrange the visit. We would rather this than attend your property and get no answer!

Membership of Ochil View We are looking for new members!

Any tenant or sharing owner (who is not already a member of the Association) can apply for membership by contacting the Association at:
customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk

Being a member of the Association, which costs £1 for life, gives you an automatic invitation to the Association's Annual General Meeting every year, enables you to vote at Meetings and also enables you to be nominated to the Board of Management, if this is something you wish to do.

As a member you will receive a share certificate confirming your £1 share in Ochil View, and prior notification and invitation to the Annual General Meeting and of any decisions to be made at the meeting.

If you are interested in becoming a Member, please get in touch.

Different Formats

We are striving to make this Newsletter as accessible as possible for everyone. Should you require a copy in large print, audio or in another language, please let us know by contacting our office on 01259 722 899 or emailing us at: customerservices@ochilviewha.co.uk



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE