



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS!...HO...HO...HO...HO...HO...HO...HO...HO...HO

# We won!



## Shettleston has won the ballot for Second Stage Transfer!

In the transfer ballot that was held between 17th November and 8th December GHA tenants voted to transfer to Shettleston by an overwhelming majority.

The actual votes were:

**YES to Transfer 87%**

**NO to Transfer 13%**

The turnout of 55.2% represented a healthy response rate and exceeded the turnout in all recent elections, including the last Glasgow East by-election.

We now enter into the period of detailed discussion and disengagement with GHA. While a great deal of the work has already been done, a number of issues still have to be addressed. However, the transfer is planned to take place on 31st March 2009.

In the meantime, we will keep everyone informed about what is happening as events unfold.

For GHA tenants in Shettleston this is a hugely significant issue. The way in which their services are delivered, particularly the maintenance and stair cleaning services, will see almost



immediate change and there will be many other arrangements that are new and different.

For Association tenants the change will be less obvious and will occur over a longer period. In this case it is the growth of the organisation as a whole that is significant. Over a period of time we hope to continue to improve our services and to take advantage of our growth and development. In this way we would hope that existing tenants

*Annie McAllister, Chair SHA/LHO, Mary Thomas, Chair SHA and SHA Director Chris Cunningham welcome the result.*

would see gradual but steady improvements in our services to them.

Over the coming weeks and months we will keep in regular contact with GHA tenants, in particular, but will circulate additional newsletters to all tenants to keep everyone informed.



### Christmas and New Year Holidays

The office will be closed on the following days:  
**Thursday 25th, Friday 26th and Monday 29th December**  
**Thursday 1st, Friday 2nd and Monday 5th January**

The work continues in 2008

# News from Technical Services...



## Springboig

The final two semi-detached houses in the Springboig Phase 4 project have now been handed back to their residents. With this phase now complete, 58 more homes – a mixture of owners and tenants – have been significantly improved and modernised.

Progress continues with Phase 5; tenders for the underground grouting works to the mines have now been received and are currently being evaluated by the Association's specialist mining engineer. All residents, including owners who have not yet indicated that they wish to participate in the contract, will be contacted in the New Year.

## Vesalius Street

Close 3 (the Ardhalm Street part of the development) will be handed over to its new tenants before Christmas. Everyone at the Association wishes these residents a very happy festive season in their new homes and every happiness in the years ahead.

Meanwhile, work continues on the remaining two closes and the shop units.

## New Development – Killin Street

The Association has just received approval from the Council to go to tender for its proposed development in the grounds of the former John Wheatley

College. This high quality development will comprise eight family 3-storey townhouses and a bungalow specially designed for a wheelchair user.

It is anticipated that this development will go on site early in 2009 and be complete within a year.

## Springboig new Kitchens and Bathrooms

We have now successfully completed the kitchen and bathroom replacement works in Springboig and the project has moved on to the Castlelaw estate and Wellshot Road area, where new kitchens are now being fitted. As before, our clerk of works and the project contractor will survey each home to ensure that tenants get the choice of kitchen they require and are advised, at the same time, of the extent of the works.

## Central Heating Upgrade

The Association has also now completed the upgrading of our heating systems, the most important element of which has been the replacement of the open flue type back boilers with new 'combi' gas boilers. This is a significant achievement for the Association as it ensures that our gas heating systems comply with the latest gas safety regulations.



*Artist's impression of the Association's proposed housing development at Killin Street.*



Tenants who still have open flue fires are strongly advised to contact the Association and let us remove them safely for you.

### External Painting

The painting contractor has completed the painting works at 578 – 616 Shettleston Road along with 648 – 660 Shettleston Road and the Dalton Street/Muiryfauld Drive area.

The remainder of the painting works at Orbiston Gardens is currently underway and should be completed by the New Year.

Tenants will be contacted direct by JS Harvie Ltd to advise of the programme dates and our clerk of works will assist tenants with any queries they may have.

### Flooding Protection

This month, the Association will be putting out to tender a contract to install flood protection measures to our properties that are most at risk of flooding and which have not previously had flood protection measures fitted. Tenants whose homes were affected by the flooding events of 2002 and just recently in 2008 have been assessed as being most at risk and we will shortly be contacting those involved regarding the works.

### Appointments for Repairs

Association staff and contractors will make every effort to make appointments for repairs or inspections that are suitable to residents.

If you are unable to keep this appointment we would ask that you contact us as soon as possible to rearrange the appointment to a more suitable time.

## Annual Gas Servicing

It is imperative that your gas system is checked and serviced annually and it is also a statutory responsibility for the Association to ensure it is done. We therefore really need your co-operation to gain access to your property to have this work carried out and would appreciate it if you would contact us to make alternative arrangements if the programme dates provided by our contractor, EON Ltd, do not suit you.



### Annual Gutter Cleaning

Over the autumn and winter the Association clears the gutters of all the debris that has gathered there. This work is very important as it removes any blockages that have built up over the year which, if left unattended, could cause water penetration. It also gives us

the opportunity to assess the condition of our roofs.

### Landscape Maintenance

The landscape maintenance team have completed all of their garden maintenance for the year and will carry out estate management duties during the winter months.

## Office Refurbishment

Work on our office extension and modernisation went on site on 17th November and is now making rapid progress.

Anyone passing our 'old' offices in Pettigrew Street over recent weeks will be well aware that the contractor has now taken possession of the site. Already, the disabled ramp arrangement at the front of the office has been demolished and removed, and the fence to the car park has also been removed. Piling has been installed to support the extension which will cover the car park itself.

Within the existing building, work is concentrating on removing partitions, some floors and out of date fittings to make ready for the modernisation work. The next step with the extension will be

preparing for the foundations themselves.

Most of the work in the coming weeks will be to the existing building but gradually work on the extension will develop until both are completed by the end of October 2009.

If all goes according to plan we will have returned to Pettigrew Street before Christmas next year.



## News from your Housing Management team...

# Housing Matters!



*June MacFarlane  
Housing  
Manager*

### Re-lets during 2008

During the 2nd quarter of this financial year, from July - September 2008, a total of 45 allocations were made.

Those allocations were for the following property sizes:

- 18 x 2apt**
- 24 x 3apt**
- 3 x 4apt**

Although 45 allocations were made, the total number of offers to applicants was 51. Of the 6 refusals, the following reasons were recorded:

- 1 location not suitable**
- 1 property too small**
- 1 offered accommodation by another agency**
- 1 property type not suitable**
- 1 condition of property**
- 1 failed to respond to offer**

### Rent Arrears

As everybody knows, rent is important to the Association since it pays for maintaining, improving and managing our properties. Over the next few months, bringing down the level of rent arrears will be a priority for us, with housing officers focusing more of their time on tenants who owe money to the Association. Tenants who are in rent arrears will notice that the Association is contacting them more often, by telephone, text, letter or in person.

Our welfare rights officer will be working more closely with the housing officers to advise and

assist tenants who have rent arrears. To free up time for this, we will no longer be holding general welfare rights surgeries, though we will still make appointments for tenants who do not have rent arrears to see the welfare rights officer.

Although our priority is to bring down our rent arrears we will make sure that tenants can still get welfare rights assistance to help them maximise their income.

Eviction for rent arrears is always a last resort but, as part of our drive to reduce arrears, we will be moving promptly to take legal action. Any case with an arrear of £1,000 or more will be entered into court and a sheriff will decide whether or not to grant decree for eviction.

### Paying Your Rent

There are many methods of paying rent to the Association so it is a simple matter of picking the one that best suits your circumstances. You can choose from the following options:

- **Housing Benefit Application**
- **Standing Order**
- **Post Office Payments**
- **Allpay**
- **Bank Payments**

At the start of every tenancy, tenants are advised of these different payment methods of payment and the relevant forms are completed to allow the transaction to take place.

However, if you think another method would suit you better, your housing officer will be able to advise you.

### Void Properties 2008/09

During the past three months from July – September 2008 the Association had 41 empty properties, or voids, returned to us. There are many reasons why tenants end their tenancies with the Association, and the following list gives the reasons over the past three months:

- 14 transfers within SHA**
- 8 deceased**
- 4 moving to be near family/friends**
- 4 moving to independent living**
- 3 buying another property**
- 3 tenant evicted**
- 2 moving near work**
- 2 property abandoned**
- 1 moving to residential care**

### Sharing Owners

Our factoring officers would like to request that sharing owners remember to use the correct card when paying their rent and factoring charges. The rent card says SHET and the factoring card says SHAF. This will greatly assist us in making sure your payment is properly allocated.



# Bogus Caller Christmas Crackdown in East End



The dangers and threats posed by bogus workmen, particularly to elderly and vulnerable members of

the community, are being highlighted by police officers in Glasgow's East End.

Bogus callers can take on a variety of different aliases, from workmen offering to carry out repairs to homes, to people carrying out surveys or charity collections, but the message the police want to stress is 'if in doubt, keep them out'.

Superintendent Michelle Martin commented, "We are determined to stop people falling prey to bogus callers. In the weeks before Christmas, we want to ensure that everyone is on their guard and won't be duped into becoming a victim of bogus caller crime. The best advice to the public is keep the door closed to anyone who has not pre-arranged to call at your home"

"Anyone who has any information or who suspects suspicious activity should contact the police on **0141 532 4300** or

alternatively **CRIMESTOPPERS** on **0800 555 111** where anonymity can be maintained."

There are a number of simple measures that householders can take to reduce the threat of becoming a victim:

- Have a chain on the door at all times and always use the spy hole or window on the door to check who is on the other side before opening it.
- Always ask to see an identity card and ask the caller what they want.
- Remember, if you are unsure of the authenticity of the caller's identification you can always ask them to call back later. Note their name and company and phone the company to check if they are genuine.
- If the caller is returning at a later time, always have a friend or relative with you when they return.
- If the caller claims to have been sent by Shettleston HA or GHA, phone us on **763 0511** to check their story.
- Never let a stranger into your home unless you are absolutely confident they are genuine.

## No security chain or spy hole on your door?

Our Handyperson Service can fit one for you if you are aged over 60. Give us a call on **763 0511** and ask for the Handyperson Service. **NB:** GHA tenants should call the GHA Handyperson Service on **0800 587 2239** and owner-occupiers can use the Age Concern Handyperson Service on **420 3686** or **433 2749**....**Give Bogus Callers the Boot!**



## Cold Weather Advice...

Here are some handy tips to prevent your home suffering the effects of winter.



- To avoid pipes freezing and bursting, keep your central heating on at a low temperature overnight and, if you are going away, leave your central heating timed to come on once a day and once at night.
- Make sure you know where the water stop cock in your house is located, in case you need to turn off your water. This way you avoid flooding your downstairs neighbour! If in doubt, give your property manager a call.
- Don't be tempted to move your bed into your sitting room if it has a back boiler and gas fire. It is much safer to use your central heating as intended. If you want some advice on the correct way to use your central heating system, call your property manager.
- Be extra careful around the home at Christmas and New Year. Candles, faulty tree lights and faulty electric blankets combined with seasonal spirits can easily cause fires.
- Most important of all make sure you keep yourself warm.

# Disabled Parking Bays – don't abuse them!



A tenant recently contacted us regarding a very topical

issue – the use of disabled parking bays by non-disabled motorists. The tenant is a blue badge holder because members of her household are disabled, and the bay outside her home was designated for their use. Unfortunately, some of her neighbours are choosing to park in the bay, causing considerable inconvenience to her and her family.

As the law stands at the moment most disabled parking bays on public roads are 'advisory' only and there are no sanctions, eg fines, for non-disabled drivers who park there. Currently, 85% of disabled parking bays are not legally enforceable.

However, all this could soon change thanks to a bill, the Disabled Persons' Parking Places Bill, which was brought to the Scottish Government by MSP Jackie Baillie in November this year. The bill aims to make it easier for councils to designate bays as disabled and to enforce fines of £60 for anyone using them who is not entitled to do so. The bill passed its first hurdle and looks likely to become law in the New Year.

In the meantime, Shettleston Housing Association would like to

urge all our residents to observe the disabled bays – especially those in residential streets. These bays are clearly intended to help an individual disabled motorist or a disabled family member go about their normal business without worrying about how they will get back into their home.

## Council Gritters

When winter arrived with a vengeance at the beginning of December and the roads and pavements turned into skating rinks, many people called our office to ask for the telephone number for the Glasgow City Council gritters. The number is **0800 373 635** in case you need it again.



## Tenants' Right to Repair

The Association aims to complete all emergency repairs within 24 hours. However, tenants who have signed the Scottish Secure Tenancy have the right to have certain types of emergency repairs carried out within the following specified times below.

If we fail to complete the work in time, tenants have the right to appoint another contractor, from the Association's approved lists, to carry out the work. This applies only to work costing less than £350. Compensation of £15 per job and £3 per day until completion is payable if the Association fails to meet these completion targets. Further information on the Right to Repair Scheme is available from the Association's office.



REPAIR RESPONSE TIMES	
Blocked fire or boiler flue	1 day
Blocked or leaking drains, soil stack, or toilet	1 day
Blocked sink or bath	1 day
Complete loss of electrical power	1 day
Insecure window, door or lock	1 day
Unsafe access path or step	1 day
Significant leaks and floodings	1 day
Partial or complete loss of gas supply	1 day
Partial or complete loss of space or water heating	1 day
Toilet not flushing	1 day
Unsafe power, sockets or fittings	1 day
Complete loss of water supply	1 day
Partial loss of electrical power	3 days
Partial loss of water supply	3 days
Loose banister or handrail	3 days
Unsafe floor or stairs	3 days
Defective kitchen or bathroom extractor fan	7 days

# How are we doing?

Our targets were reviewed by the management committee in April 2008 when the Internal Management Plan was approved. Once again, we can tell you that we are meeting the majority of these revised targets.

In each newsletter we report to you on how well we are meeting the 20 targets - Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) - set by committee at the start of the year. We have selected 13 of the most important KPIs to report on, and these are listed in the accompanying table.

We are happy to say that over the three month period from July to September 2008, the Association met or exceeded 13 out of the 20 targets, which is the same as in the previous quarter.

The table shows that we met our target of letting houses in 18 days compared with a target of 20 days. This is a good result for the housing management staff, particularly when the number of empty houses has increased significantly in relation to our estimate. The Association had 110 empty houses in the first six months of the year although the estimate for the whole year was 150. We will be carefully monitoring our performance in repairing and letting an increased number of houses. Our performance on completing routine and urgent repairs exceeded the target for the last quarter and throughout the previous 12 months and is an excellent result from our maintenance staff. Last quarter,

Performance Review 1st July – 30th September 2008			
Performance Indicator	Target	Achieved	Comment
Current tenant arrears (total owed by all current tenants)	£185,085 (4.5%)	£250,077 (6.07%)	£64,922 over: current tenant arrears continue to be an issue for the Association
Non-technical arrears as percentage of gross rent	3.50%	3.99%	The Association will pursue tenants to reduce this figure
Rent loss from vacant property	£7,750	£14,974	£7,223 over: due to a higher number of voids this quarter
Time to re-let vacant houses	20 days	18 days	Two days better than target!
Proportion of lets to homeless referrals	25%	20%	Much closer to target this quarter
Emergency repairs	100%	100%	Target met
Urgent repairs	95%	99%	Target exceeded by 4%
Routine repairs	95%	98%	Target exceeded by 3%
Pre-inspection of repairs	15%	22%	Target exceeded by 7%
Post-inspection of repairs	15%	18%	Target exceeded by 3%
Neighbour complaint investigations	95% of cases in 48 hours	100%	Target met
Formal complaints	100% response in 3 days	100%	Target met
Staff absence	5%	3.12%	Target exceeded

Key: ■ Target exceeded ■ Target met ■ Target not met

we also exceeded our target for carrying out pre- and post-inspections.

Unfortunately the “need to do better” area is once again, the control and management of rent arrears. Current tenant rent arrears are £64,992 over target

and in our ‘Housing Matters’ page we outline the various steps we will be taking to address this.

If you want to find out more about our performance, contact Margaret Paton, our performance and compliance manager.



# Christmas Wordsearch

Find the Christmassy words hidden in the grid and return your entry to us by January 31st for the chance to win some shopping vouchers.

- Bell
- Christmas
- Elf
- Snowman
- Northpole
- Stocking
- Rudolph
- Gift
- Reindeer
- Robin
- Star
- Toys
- Shepherds
- Peace
- Joy
- Sleigh
- Chimney
- Santa
- Tree
- Angels

D	U	G	B	E	E	S	R	O	H	S	R	E	A	P	J
T	N	M	R	U	D	O	L	P	H	E	M	M	I	Q	S
T	P	N	F	E	B	E	R	E	E	S	E	N	A	P	J
D	A	S	M	I	I	T	F	S	I	R	S	V	H	S	Z
S	S	G	N	S	A	N	M	R	I	G	H	R	O	S	E
S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S	E	D	H	H	I	X	C
N	T	L	G	I	F	T	A	E	A	T	N	A	S	A	P
O	N	O	F	N	S	M	R	P	E	Y	W	E	O	N	N
W	B	P	Y	A	T	T	E	T	N	R	O	S	Y	P	D
M	I	H	F	S	O	A	R	A	T	S	L	J	N	G	Q
A	M	T	I	Z	C	H	I	M	N	E	Y	G	S	P	A
N	L	R	N	E	K	G	T	I	G	R	E	C	U	S	D
X	H	O	A	N	I	E	S	N	L	T	E	M	A	J	E
C	N	N	L	H	N	H	A	L	L	E	B	F	L	E	S
Y	I	L	E	I	G	N	X	N	S	R	R	I	A	L	I
W	M	E	G	U	P	O	U	I	E	R	B	E	S	I	A



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

**Last competition result...**

Congratulations to **Mrs Elizabeth Robertson** of Cockenzie Street who found the missing message in the last newsletter. It was, of course, VOTE YES FOR SHETTLESTON. Mrs Robertson wins a £30 gift voucher.

## USEFUL NUMBERS



- General Enquiries** 763 0511
- SHA Repairs** 763 0511
- SHA Emergency Repairs**  
(outside office hours) 08459 303031
- GHA Repairs**  
24 hours 0800 595595
- Shettleston Police Station** 532 4800
- TRANSCO**  
Gas Emergencies 0800 111999
- Scottish Water**  
24 hours 0845 600 8855
- Glasgow City Council**  
Cleansing Department  
Bulk Refuse 287 9700  
Environmental  
Health 287 6548  
Pest Control 287 9700  
Stair Lighting 0800 595595  
Street Lighting 0800 373635
- Benefit Agencies**  
Job Centre Plus 532 8500  
Housing Benefit & Council Tax Benefit 287 1500
- Office Opening Times:  
Monday – Friday 9.30am – 5.00pm

## Association Membership

I am interested in becoming a member of Shettleston Housing Association and request an Application Form and further information.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Post or hand in to:  
Shettleston Housing Association  
1682 Shettleston Road  
Glasgow G32 9AN  
Tel: 0141 763 0511  
Fax: 0141 778 5278  
Email: sha@shettleston.co.uk  
Web: www.shettleston.co.uk