

# HOUSING

# news

THE QUARTERLY  
NEWSLETTER  
FOR TENANTS  
OF WEST  
DUNBARTONSHIRE

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SUMMER 2020

WE'RE  
HERE FOR  
YOU

**Housing and Employability teams have been working around the clock to ensure West Dunbartonshire remains a safe and supportive place for tenants during Covid-19.**

Since lockdown began in March, employees have continued to provide a full housing and homelessness service. This has included providing emergency accommodation to over 100 households, including those fleeing domestic abuse, and ensuring they have the support required to avoid isolation or concerns about food. The teams have also made almost 5000 calls to tenants, offering assistance and acting as a friendly voice of reassurance.

In addition, over 1,500 West Dunbartonshire residents have received assistance from the Crisis Support Team, a service introduced to help vulnerable people during the pandemic.

Those supported include residents who are isolated and don't have relatives or friends who can help and those who are self-isolating or have underlying medical conditions.

The team offers a range of advice, guidance and practical assistance seven days a week including collecting and delivering essential groceries or prescriptions, and providing befriending to combat loneliness.

Of the requests for help, a number have been given assistance from volunteers, while others have been referred for emergency ongoing support from local food banks, who have provided them with essential supplies.

The team is working in partnership with Food For Thought who are providing emergency food aid parcels and help with shopping through their Able to Pay scheme.

Residents who have been identified by the government as required to stay at home and "shield" from the virus over the next 12 weeks are also being contacted by the Crisis Support Team.



**“This service is doing a vital job to ensure the most vulnerable members of our community feel safe”**

Councillor Diane Docherty, Convener of Housing and Communities, said: "This service is doing a vital job to ensure the most vulnerable members of our community feel safe and have all they need during this difficult time.

"Even where people don't need our help at the moment, I hope they find some reassurance in knowing that we are here to help if their circumstances change.

"I'm so pleased to see so many residents have benefitted from this support already, and I would encourage anyone who feels vulnerable and in need of support to get in touch."

If you require additional support and have no-one to help, please do not hesitate to make contact by texting the word 'help' to 07800 002 582 or by visiting [www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/coronavirus/additional-support/](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/coronavirus/additional-support/)

Tenants who do not have access to a mobile phone or internet can also request help by calling **The Contact Centre on 01389 738282 (press option 5)**. Lines are busy due to the high volume of calls from residents seeking assistance so please only phone if you need assistance and are unable to access the internet/mobile phone. Housing officers are also available if any tenant requires advice or assistance.

Food for Thought can be contacted on **01389 734514**.



## Domestic abuse victims - you are not alone

An additional 34 domestic abuse victims have sought support from West Dunbartonshire Council since lockdown measures were introduced in March.

The figure includes 15 new direct referrals to the Council's dedicated tenant support service No Home For Domestic Abuse, including a victim who has been re-homed and others who received help with changed locks, financial advice and other support.

Another 19 cases have come to light through referrals to the homelessness team, who have provided temporary accommodation for victims from existing stock or with support from local housing partners.

**“I want to remind anyone who is suffering at the hands of a domestic abuser - you are not alone and there is help available, so please get in touch.**

Councillor Diane Docherty, Convener of Housing and Communities, said: "I want to remind anyone who is suffering at the hands of a domestic abuser - you are not alone and there is help available, so please get in touch.

"These additional cases highlight the very dangerous situation that some people are finding themselves in when they are following government guidance. Sadly, for a great many, staying at home is simply not safe.

"Our No Home for Domestic Abuse initiative can help. Please do not suffer in silence."

No Home for Domestic Abuse, introduced by West Dunbartonshire Council in June 2018, offers immediate access to practical help and legal assistance following any instance of abuse in a Council home. Support is also available for non-Council tenants and residents through the homelessness service and local Womens Aid organisations.

### Useful contact info:

**No Home for Domestic Abuse Team**  
Tel: 01389 738510

Local support groups can be contacted as follows:

**Homelessness**  
Tel: 01389 738282

(for out-of-hours please use the emergency freephone number 0800 197 1004)

**Dumbarton Women's Aid**  
[www.ddwa.org.uk/](http://www.ddwa.org.uk/)  
Tel: 01389 751036

**Clydebank Women's Aid**  
[www.clydebankwomensaid.co.uk/](http://www.clydebankwomensaid.co.uk/)  
Tel: 0141 952 8118

In an emergency call Police Scotland on 999.  
To report non-emergency incidents call Police Scotland on 101



## Delays to the delivery of New Homes

The Council's new build programme has been delayed after work was temporarily halted due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

It is expected that work at the developments - which aimed to deliver over 300 high quality homes this year - may experience at least four months delay.

The first tenants were due to move into new homes in the St Andrew's development in Clydebank last month, but it is now expected it will now be late Summer/Early Autumn.

**“ We are working behind the scenes to ensure work can recommence as soon as it is safe to do so”**

Councillor Diane Docherty, Convener of Housing and Communities, said: “We are continuing to follow government guidance and are working behind the scenes to ensure work can recommence as soon as it is safe to do so.”

For more information about the Council's new build programme, please contact [john.kerr@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:john.kerr@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)



## Tenant makes face masks for local community

A kind-hearted tenant is using her sewing skills to provide her local community with homemade face masks.

Marina Gray, who lives in Dumbarton, made her first face mask after a friend in Madrid who had been seriously ill with Covid-19, asked her to make them for a carer in Birmingham.

Now she has used the same pattern to create more than 85 masks which have been given to carers, friends and Marina's family.

The masks have been made in a variety of different brightly-coloured fabrics, with prints including cats, moons and floral designs.

Marina said: “I'm happy to help with anything that, alongside social distancing and hygiene, will help to stop the spread of this terrible virus. My friend thankfully recovered but we all need to take all the precautions we can to stay safe and well.”

# HOUSING EMPLOYEES VOLUNTEER IN RANGE OF ROLES DURING COVID-19

Dedicated Housing employees are volunteering in a range of critical roles to help deal with the ongoing Covid19 pandemic.

The volunteers have moved from a range of roles to provide extra resource in areas with the most demand. They are now in place to support residents over the phone in the contact centre, reaching out to vulnerable people on the shielding list and making deliveries of essential supplies.

Donna Kirkwood usually works in the Housing Development team, but volunteered to help some of our most vulnerable and isolated tenants and residents as part of the Crisis Support Team. So far she has supported over 30 vulnerable residents across West Dunbartonshire, including those who are shielding, pregnant, over 70 or have an existing health condition.

She said: “The majority require ongoing support with a range of tasks on a weekly basis. This includes assisting with shopping, collecting prescriptions, befriending, taking bins out and dog walking.

“The befriending element is particularly important during a time like this as being able to speak to someone helps to reassure people, benefits their mental health and prevents social isolation.

“It has also enabled me to build trusting relationships with the people that I am supporting. The appreciation they have for the support I provide is very rewarding.”



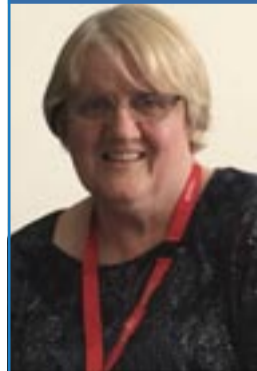
**“ The befriending element is particularly important during a time like this as being able to speak to someone helps to reassure people, benefits their mental health and prevents social isolation”**

Peter Anderson, 63, is a Clerk of Works at the new St. Andrew's development in Clydebank. He is now volunteering from home by telephoning our most vulnerable residents who are on the government's shielding list.

He said: “I am given a list of people and call them one by one, to check in with them, offer help if they need it, check they are doing okay, have enough food and supplies, are getting the appropriate support or if they have specific needs or requests I can refer to the appropriate service.

“Every little bit does help. I hope by receiving a call, the person on the end of the phone feels reassured that they can access support if they need it, and that is incredibly important when things are so uncertain for everyone.”

## Tenant's voice with Frances McGonagle



### Stronger together

**All our lives have been turned upside down with this pandemic – it is a scary time but I have been heartened by the majority of the community response to help each other in stopping this virus and protect all our loved ones.**

There is a lot of support being made available and I hope everyone who needs help gets it. Many have never needed help before and it can be a daunting time but you're not alone. The support isn't just about help when you or your family are isolating in terms of food and prescriptions but also help to deal with all the other issues that the lockdown has brought – unemployment, isolation and loneliness,

domestic abuse.

There has at least been one new beginning as the Council has a new tenant participation officer and we are delighted to welcome Hanne Thijs to West Dunbartonshire and look forward to meeting her in person!

If you have any questions or concerns that you want to raise with the WDTRO please do so and our contact details are below.

Please take care of yourself and your neighbours and I hope that our appreciation of each other will be part of the new normal.

To contact the WDTRO please email: [harrymccormack.wdtro@gmail.com](mailto:harrymccormack.wdtro@gmail.com) or go to [www.wdtro.org.uk](http://www.wdtro.org.uk) for more information.



# TENANTS SHAPING HOUSING SERVICES



**Tenants have influenced significant changes in Housing Services during the past year including taking part in six consultations.**

Consultations give communities the opportunity to give opinions on how to improve services and policies and ensure any changes are representative of tenants needs.

All tenants are encouraged to get involved and have their say throughout the year, with feedback on consultation results given directly to tenants who participate.

Councillor Diane Docherty, Convener of Housing and Communities, said: "It is so important that our tenants are given the opportunity to have their say, and I would encourage you all to participate on consultations that are publicised in Housing News and through the Council's social media channels."

**“It is so important that our tenants are given the opportunity to have their say”**

"We truly value all the views we receive and we want tenants to realise that they can have an influence on decisions being made that affect their communities. You'll see below that tenants ideas and opinions can make important changes and improvements."

To get involved, look out for consultations being promoted on the Council website or social media, or join the Interested Tenant Register to get information sent directly by contacting Jane Mack on 07983 542993 or email: jane.mack@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

## How tenants have shaped decisions in the past year:

As part of the **Caretaking Review** tenants comments lead to retaining the dedicated caretakers for all multi-storey blocks and a focus on daily cleaning tasks. The Anti Social Behaviour service was also extended into the evening to provide additional support to tenants.

The **Rent Setting Consultation** included a public meeting and public vote on different rent options. The preferred 1.9% increase was then agreed by Councillors.

The **Sheltered Housing Service Standards** review ensured standards were still relevant and measurable so that performance can be published and discussed at the Sheltered Housing Forum meetings. The agreed service standards were also included in the new sheltered housing handbook so that all sheltered tenants are aware of them.

A working group with eight tenant volunteers was set up to review of the **Annual Charter Performance Report** and the housing service standards that get reported in Housing News. The group amended the report to make it clearer and give a realistic review of housing performance. They also wanted more focus on where performance wasn't meeting targets with information on what was being done to improve this. All the group's suggestions were incorporated into the new report.

The **Tenant Priority Budget** gives tenants the chance to decide which improvements are value for money and should go ahead. 18 proposals were approved with £177,292.50 amount of improvement work being progressed.

Our **Rent Collection Policy** was reviewed using an online survey, with all comments taken on board and additional explanations added to the final policy.

## Additional funding secured for Dennystoun Forge

**More than £90,000 has been allocated to make improvements at the Council-run Gypsy Traveller site Dennystoun Forge.**

The one-off funding, a share of a £2million pot being spent by the Scottish Government on sites throughout the country, will support improved quality of life for tenants.

Tenants at the site will have the opportunity to participate directly in decisions about how the money is used and give their views on what changes they would like to see made.

Essential maintenance including fire safety is funded separately, and this additional money will only be used for projects that tenants believe will make a positive difference.

The local Housing Officer and tenant participation officer will begin discussions with the Dennystoun Forge tenants as soon as physical distancing restrictions allow.

Once spending decisions have been agreed, progress will be shared with Dennystoun Forge tenants as well as the Scottish Government.



**Councillor Docherty  
Convener of Housing  
& Communities**

**Hello everyone and welcome to the Summer edition of Housing News.**

I hope you are all continuing to cope with the challenges Covid-19 has thrown at you, whether that be shielding at home for the foreseeable future, seeing a loved one become unwell, juggling home schooling your children with work or feeling isolated.

Please know that whatever your circumstances, if you need additional help to manage during this, then we are here for you.

Our Crisis Support Team, run by our Working4U service, have already offered support to more than 1000 residents, with practical tasks like arranging for essential food supplies, or collecting and delivering medication.

The team also give great advice on finances, and employment, so don't hesitate to get in touch if you need some help.

**“I am also proud to see the community response, and the way we have come together to support each other”**

I have to say I am exceptionally proud to see how Housing and all the other Council services have responded to this pandemic, acting quickly to ensure residents are properly supported.

From our homelessness teams to Repair teams, our refuse collectors, care at home teams and education staff, everyone is working extremely hard to make our new normal manageable.

It has been wonderful to see the community response and the way that so many people have come together to support each other.

The stories of community groups volunteering, of delivering much-needed essential supplies to our vulnerable residents, children painting rainbows, our weekly clap for key workers, and even the fact that the majority of us are doing the right thing and following government guidance about physical distancing.

All of those things make me proud, and if one good thing does come out of this situation, perhaps we will emerge from this with closer knit communities who realise the importance of looking out for one another.

Please take care, and though I am unable to meet you in person, please get in touch via telephone or email if you have a query you think I might be able to help with.

Diane



## USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

**West Dunbartonshire Council Contact Centre** can be reached on **01389 738282** and is open Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4.30pm, Friday 9am to 3.30pm. The contact centre can direct your call on any housing matter. There is a lot of useful information on our website which is updated regularly. Please visit [www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

### Help with Homelessness

Homeless Emergency (24 hour freephone) **0800 197 1004**

### Homeless & Housing Options Hub

Clydebank **01389 738625**  
 Dumbarton **01389 776409**  
 Alexandria **01389 776400**  
 Open 8.45am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday

### Ways to pay your rent

#### Through your bank...

This is our preferred method for you to pay your rent. It's easy for you to set up a Direct Debit or standing order offering you peace of mind and convenience. You can access the forms online to set up these payments with your bank.

#### By telephone or internet...

You can use your debit or credit card to make payment by:

- visiting our website [www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk) and clicking on the 'Pay It' button to go to the payments page
- using our 24hr automatic telephone payment service on **0161 622 6948**
- calling our Contact Centre on **01389 738282**

### Social Work

#### Adults and older people

Dumbarton **01389 776499**  
 Clydebank **01389 811760**  
 Children & families (all areas) **0141 562 8800**

#### Women's Aid

Dumbarton/Alexandria **01389 751036**  
 Clydebank **0141 952 8118**  
 Relationship Scotland **0141 248 5249**

#### Working4U

Benefits & money advice, employability & learning **01389 738282**

### Repairs

Call us on Freephone **0800 073 8708** during office hours 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4pm on a Friday.

Alternatively, you can email the repairs service on: [housing.repairs@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:housing.repairs@west-dunbarton.gov.uk) or visit the website: [www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/maintenance-repairs](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/maintenance-repairs) Outwith these hours or to report an emergency repair call **0800 197 1004**

### Gas heating repairs

(City Technical) **0844 579 6493**

### General

Council Tax **01389 737444**  
 Special (bulky) uplifts - **01389 738282**  
 Grass cutting **01389 608412**  
 Litter hotline **01389 772059**  
 Environmental Health **01389 738290**  
 Pest Control **01389 738282**  
 Waste Aware **0845 111 0050**  
 Trading Standards **01389 738519**  
 Caretaking Service **01389 73 82 82**  
 Dog Warden **0141 951 7957**  
 Home content insurance **01389 737867**

### General Numbers for Advice and Assistance

MY BUS (bookable bus service for elderly and disabled) **0141 333 3252**

Energy advice - LEAP **01389 744693** or email [linsey@wdcab.co.uk](mailto:linsey@wdcab.co.uk)

Police non emergency **101**  
 In an emergency dial **999**

Crimestoppers (freephone) **0800 555 111**

1 LOMOND	2 LEVEN	3 DUMBARTON	4 KILPATRICK	5 CLYDEBANK CENTRAL	6 CLYDEBANK WATERFRONT	
<b>ELECTED MEMBERS 2017 - 2022</b>	<b>JAMES BOLLAN</b> 4 ENDRICK WAY ALEXANDRIA G83 0UR T: 01389 737506 M: 07803 668766	<b>KAREN CONAGHAN</b> COUNCIL OFFICES COLLEGE STREET DUMBARTON G82 1NR T: 01389 737237 M: 07766 511565	<b>JIM FINN</b> COUNCIL OFFICES CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL CLYDEBANK G81 1UA T: 01389 738520 M: 07961 713007	<b>DENIS AGNEW</b> COUNCIL OFFICES CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL CLYDEBANK G81 1UA T: 0141 952 8954	<b>GAIL CASEY</b> COUNCIL OFFICES CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL CLYDEBANK G81 1UA T: 01389 738587 M: 07909 891242	
	<b>JONATHAN McCOLL</b> COUNCIL OFFICES COLLEGE STREET DUMBARTON G82 1NR T: 01389 737511 M: 07769 367035	<b>IAN DICKSON</b> COUNCIL OFFICES COLLEGE STREET DUMBARTON G82 1NR T: 01389 737712 M: 07766 511410	<b>DAVID McBRIDE</b> COUNCIL OFFICES COLLEGE STREET DUMBARTON G82 1NR T: 01389 737367 M: 07961 711664	<b>DOUGLAS McALLISTER</b> COUNCIL OFFICES CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL CLYDEBANK G81 1UA T: 01389 738745	<b>JIM BROWN</b> COUNCIL OFFICES CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL CLYDEBANK G81 1UA T: 01389 738559 M: 07961 713010	<b>WILLIAM HENDRIE</b> COUNCIL OFFICES CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL CLYDEBANK G81 1UA T: 01389 738650 M: 07943 813111
	<b>SALLY PAGE</b> COUNCIL OFFICES COLLEGE STREET DUMBARTON G82 1NR T: 01389 737749 M: 07766 901124	<b>CAROLINE McALLISTER</b> COUNCIL OFFICES COLLEGE STREET DUMBARTON G82 1NR T: 01389 737172 M: 07766 512236	<b>IAIN McLAREN</b> COUNCIL OFFICES COLLEGE STREET DUMBARTON G82 1NR T: 01389 737505 M: 07766 902747	<b>LAWRENCE O'NEILL</b> COUNCIL OFFICES CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL CLYDEBANK G81 1UA T: 01389 738704 M: 07909 890842	<b>DIANE DOCHERTY</b> COUNCIL OFFICES CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL CLYDEBANK G81 1UA M: 07741 296890	<b>DANIEL LENNIE</b> COUNCIL OFFICES CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL CLYDEBANK G81 1UA T: 01389 738599 M: 07741 296922
	<b>MARTIN ROONEY</b> COUNCIL OFFICES COLLEGE STREET DUMBARTON G82 1NR T: 01389 737579 M: 07909 890846	<b>JOHN MILLAR</b> COUNCIL OFFICES COLLEGE STREET DUMBARTON G82 1NR T: 01389 737882 M: 07961 713003	<b>BRIAN WALKER</b> COUNCIL OFFICES COLLEGE STREET DUMBARTON G82 1NR T: 01389 737585 M: 07766 991640	<b>JOHN MOONEY</b> COUNCIL OFFICES CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL CLYDEBANK G81 1UA T: 01389 738538 M: 07538 842583	<b>MARIE McNAIR</b> COUNCIL OFFICES CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL CLYDEBANK G81 1UA T: 01389 738743 M: 07909 891237	



## Golden Friendship provides support through Covid-19

**A local charity is responding to Covid-19 by delivering lunches to families or anyone in isolation.**

The Golden Friendship Club, which was set up by Jim McLaren and ordinarily hosts a regular club, is working with a team of volunteers to prepare and deliver the food.

So far the team, with the help of Scottish Gas, have delivered 1,750 lunches across West Dunbartonshire.

Jim is being helped by Pat Dougan, Len Oliver, Bobby McLaren, Karen McLaren, Karen Beaton and Shuggie Osborne.

The club is also still putting on entertainment for members through social media.



## Gas safety checks during Covid-19

**Landlords are still required to carry out annual gas safety checks on appliances during the Covid-19 pandemic.**

All tenants who are due to have their boiler checked will receive a letter from Council's contractor City Technical with an appointment date.

If you need to postpone the appointment because a member of your household is showing signs of the COVID19 virus you can contact them to have it rescheduled.

If you are shielding, the safety check can still be completed safely by allowing access but you will be asked to stay in a different room while the engineer works. Our contractor will ensure they adhere to physical distancing and wear the appropriate PPE when in your home so please ensure you give them adequate space to work when leaving and entering your home.

**If you have any queries, contact 0333 2020708**

### Other formats

This document can be viewed as a pdf on our website: <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/housing/housing-news/> It can also be provided in large print, Braille or on audio cassette and can be translated into different community languages. Please contact: Corporate Communications, Council Offices, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton, G82 1QL. Tel: 01389 737000

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。  
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درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعة الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formie audio.

## Maintenance and Repairs Service

**During the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Building Services are still operating but focusing on emergency repairs.**

These emergency repairs are limited to situations where there would be a risk to property occupiers or the building if not undertaken. Unfortunately during this time, and until restrictions are relaxed, the service is unable to complete routine repairs.

Please be assured that we are already planning for how to safely reintroduce this service when government guidance changes in a way which will allow the team to complete outstanding repairs efficiently.



**HOUSINGnews**  
 Don't miss the next edition of Housing News due out in autumn!

