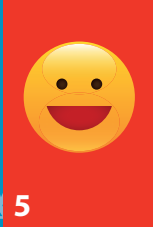




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Winter 2015

Abertalk



Work Begins On New Community Garden



Work started on a new community garden for the residents of Abertay Housing Dryburgh Gardens Sheltered Housing Complex. The work is led by Green Shoots Landscaping & Gardening service, a Social Enterprise of Helm Training Ltd, who work with young people to gain qualifications and work related experience for their transition from school into the workplace.

The main funding for the project has come from the Postcode Community Trust &

Awards for All Scotland, which is designed to bring communities together. The Green Shoots service has already been involved in a series of intergenerational projects, and is continuing its good work. The completed garden area will comprise raised beds, new mono-blocked path, seating & shrubbery, which will allow residents to benefit from learning, practicing and enjoying gardening skills, along with spending time in the new garden with friends and family.

Thanks to funding from the Integrated Care Fund in Dundee, four local Housing Associations, including Abertay, have developed a new partnership. Each of the Housing Associations has a Community Engagement Worker who use their knowledge and experience of local facilities, services and agencies to provide support, advice and signposting to older people in the community.



A New Service for Older People in Dundee

- Helping
- Older
- People
- Engage

Are you, or is someone you know dealing with the impact of bereavement, social isolation, increasing frailty or just need some information and advice about local services, housing or care options?

If you know of an older person who might benefit from this free service or you would like to enquire for yourself, please give us a call on 01382 903545.

The committee and staff of Abertay Housing Association wish their tenants a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES:

Close Wednesday 23rd December at 4.30pm

Re-open Tuesday 29th December at 8.30am.

Close Wednesday 30th December at 4.30pm.

Re-open Tuesday 5th January 2016 at 8.30am.

If you have an emergency repair when the office is closed please phone Abertay on 01382 903545 and listen to the recorded message. You can then choose the option for transferring your call to our Contractors.



UC Universal Credit **IS HERE**

Top tips for getting ready

On 2nd November, Universal Credit was introduced in the Dundee area. Initially it is available for single, working age claimants with no children. However, it is to be rolled out to include couples and families next year. It is anticipated that by 2017 all income based benefits (including housing benefit) will be replaced by Universal Credit.

Abertay is working hard to make this transition easy for all our tenants.

Top tips to remember:

Build up a credit - waiting times for Universal Credit average around 6-7 weeks before a payment is received. Start thinking about how you are going to pay for rent, food and other essential expenses in this period. Any money you put aside now will come in really handy whilst you wait on your monthly payment.

Make sure you have a working bank account - you will be advised by Jobcentre staff to set one up. Most major banks should be able to offer you a basic bank account.

Make a budget - Universal Credit is paid monthly so you need to monitor carefully how much money you have coming in and what you spend and ensure your essential bills, including rent, are covered.

Pay your rent - Universal Credit will include the money to pay your rent. Remember to pay the full rent on time to avoid any rent arrears.

Don't panic - Universal Credit is a big change but we're here to help. Contact our Welfare Officer on 01382 903545 if you have any questions or concerns.



Abertay Housing Association launched its Facebook page on 20th October 2015

We will use this page to post regular status updates and also as another method of communication to inform all our residents what is happening within our Estates and with our partner agencies.

You will find us listed as Abertay Housing Association or follow the link from our website www.abertayha.co.uk

We invite you to like and share our page and leave any comments. The private message facility can also be used by any residents to ask any questions or get advice on any matter.

Paying Your Rent

At this time of the year, there are often many competing priorities, with rising fuel costs and other household expenses.

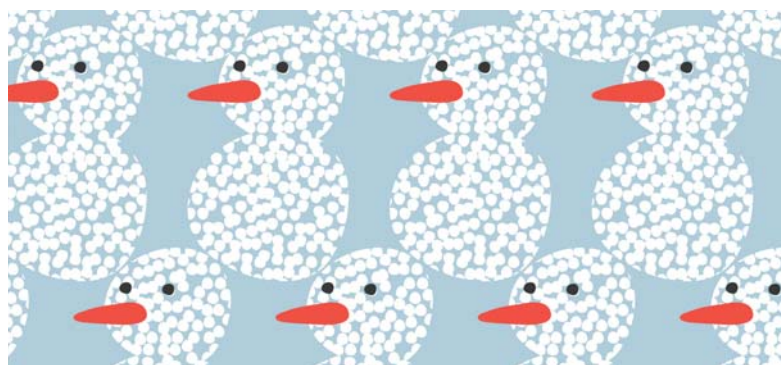
Please make sure you budget for your December and January rent and that you don't fall into rent arrears.



If you need advice on paying your rent or benefit eligibility, don't wait until it's too late.

Please contact our Rent Team on

01382 513809



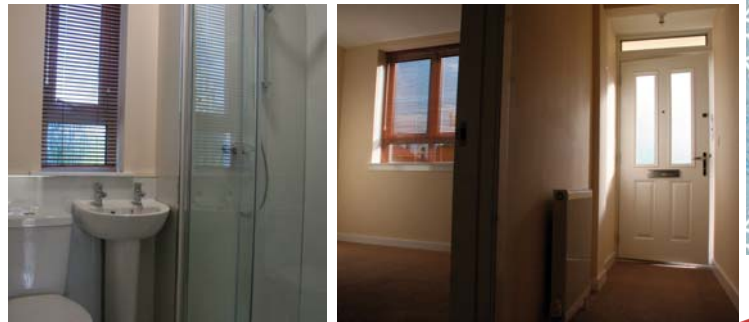
Craigiebank

Our work with Robert Gordon University in Craigiebank has now reached its first real milestone where we have completed the first 6 pilot homes.

These have now been fully insulated and fitted with new heating, windows, kitchens and bathrooms and are "like new homes" inside.

Over the next six months we will be monitoring them to make sure the energy savings and performance is as good as we had hoped so we can roll out these works to the other 80 homes in the area.

Meanwhile on a recent visit, Stuart Hosie MP complimented Abertay on the project saying he was delighted with what he had seen.



Prize Draw for Direct Debit Payers

All tenants who pay their rent by direct debit are entered into a free prize draw which is held every six months.

The latest lucky winner of a £50 voucher was D Lumsden from Fintry.

If you are interested in paying your rent by Direct Debit, please contact the **Customer Service Team** Tel No. **01382 903545**.

You will be awarded a £25 voucher when the 1st 6 months of direct debit payments are received. Your name will then be entered into our bi-annual prize draw for a £50 voucher of your choice.

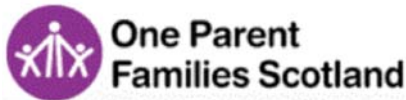
End of the Right to Buy



The Housing Scotland Act 2014, passed last summer, signals an end to the Right to Buy Scheme.

Those tenants who retain the Right to Buy have until 31 July 2016 to submit their application.

Remember if you are considering buying your home, as well as the purchase price, you will also have to pay other ongoing costs such as buildings insurance, repairs and maintenance and factoring charges.



New Community Project for Fintry

A great new project has started in Fintry, offering a range of free support to residents! It is being run jointly by Abertay and One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS), and is based at The Families House at 20 Grampian Gardens, and from a new flat at 87 Fintryside.

While OPFS have provided brilliant family centred activities from The Families House for several years, we are particularly excited at being able to offer activities from a base in Fintryside for the first time. An Open Day for residents was held a couple of weeks ago, and clearly there is a lot of interest! Activities now running from the Fintryside flat include Parents and Toddler groups, Welfare and Benefits Advice sessions, Community Based Job Shop, and a Family Tea Time Club – and we will add even more things soon! We are grateful to the Scottish Government’s People and Communities Fund for the grant to make this project possible. At present, the project only has funding to continue until next March, but we will be trying our best to keep it there for residents for many years to come!



ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE NOW AVAILABLE AT FINTRYSIDE COMMUNITY FLAT

The following drop in sessions are available for any Abertay tenant or resident seeking advice or assistance:

Tuesday (10-12am)

A Welfare Officer can help with any benefits or Universal Credit queries.

Wednesday (10-12am)

Mark from Shelter can provide you with independent, impartial advice on tackling debt including rent arrears.

Thursday (10-12am)

Alan Fraser from Community Learning and Development can help you develop your job seeking skills

To find out more, phone OPFS on 01382 502504, or contact Abertay.

Serendipity Garden Project

Abertay Housing Association successfully applied to the NHS Tayside community Innovation Fund for financial resources to support and encourage community participation among residents who live locally in Dykehead Place/Brougham Gardens.



The funds made it possible to create a ‘serendipity garden’ to the rear of the Abertay sheltered complex in Dykehead Place. With a little encouragement from their Housing Officer, Heather Borland, the residents planned and executed a thoughtful strategy to enable them to

transform an underutilised area in the middle of a busy thoroughfare into a serene garden. The residents, many of whom are elderly, now have a lovely safe place in which to sit, mix, relax, chat and enjoy. Local residents, Mr & Mrs Barron and Mrs Muir, along with the Scheme Manager, Mary Kelly,

were instrumental in the plan coming together. Many items purchased from the allocated funding, along with lashings of elbow grease from local residents have made this venture possible. An official opening day took place on 4th September 2015.

How did we do?

We are working hard to improve our services to you and provide value for money. We thought you would like to have a look at how we performed from April – September 2015 compared to last year.

PERFORMANCE UPDATE	Target	Previous Year	To 30/06/2015	To 30/09/2015	
Percentage of our stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	100%	86.9%	98.3%	98.3%	29 properties not meeting SHQS due to owner objections and tenant refusals
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	4 hours	1.9 hours	3.1 hours	2.8 hours	😊
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	6 working days	5.1 days	5.0 days	4.7 days	😊
Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time	85%	90.9%	90.3%	90.7%	😊
Percentage of repairs appointments kept	>95%	91.0	90.3%	91.0%	😞
VALUE FOR MONEY					
Percentage of total rent due collected in the year	100%	103.3%	96.9%	97.5%	😞
Average length of time taken to re-let properties	<21 days	18.6 days	10.3 days	10.9 days	😊

Complaints

Between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2015 the Association received 157 - 1st stage complaints and 10 - 2nd stage complaints. These related to a variety of issues. From 1st April 2015 to 30th September 2015, we have received 96 - 1st stage and 3 - 2nd stage complaints. Abertay records any expressions of dissatisfaction and we use these to improve our processes or procedures in the future.

COMPLAINTS	Dealt with within	Within timescale	To 30/06/2015	To 30/09/2015	
Stage 1 complaint	1 – 5 days	87.7%	98.0%	97.9%	😊
Stage 2 complaint	2 - 20 days	100%	100%	100%	😊



How would you like to be able to buy your electricity and gas up to 10% cheaper, and be confident you are getting the best rates?

For some time, Abertay has been working with other Housing Associations on an ambitious plan to set up the UK's first "not for profit" energy supplier - Our Power!

With the Scottish Government having agreed to provide a loan it now seems Our Power will actually happen!

We hope that some time next year, Abertay's tenants will have the chance to switch to getting their electricity and gas from Our Power, to take advantage of the cheaper rates!

Watch this space...

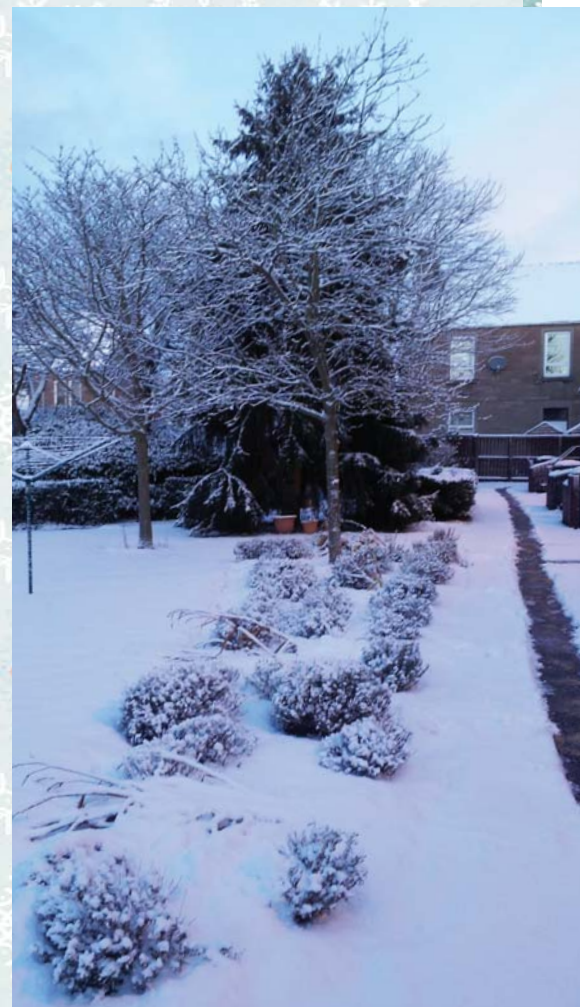
Winter Maintenance Programme

We are sure you will agree that the Open Space Maintenance Service has improved significantly over the past few years. However, Abertay continue to look for ways in which we could improve Estates by carrying out regular inspections of these areas, whilst recording any issues reported by our customers.

Now that the grass cutting season has finished for another year, our Landscaping contractors will now be focusing on leaf and litter picking, pruning of trees (in some cases removal of diseased or overgrown trees) and replanting of some shrub beds, as part of the Winter Maintenance Works programme.

However, we realise the importance of being able to advise our customers of a detailed list of the works scheduled to be carried out between December 2015 and February 2016 in advance. As a result we have made this available on our website, www.abertayha.co.uk within the Owners section.

Residents in the North Fintry area have probably noticed the substantial works undertaken by Tayside Contracts to roads and footpaths in Grampian Gardens, Amond Way, Amond Gardens, Grampian Close and Cheviot Rise. Due to the work carried out, these footpaths and roads have now been adopted by Dundee City Council. This means that Abertay are no longer responsible for supplying / replenishment of grit bins in these areas and residents should contact Dundee City Council in relation to any Winter weather issues such as snow clearing or filling up of grit bins.



For further details please contact Dundee City Council on 0800 145 6897

Did you know?

Abertay contributes £7,000 a year towards the cost of a dedicated Energy Advisor employed by Dundee Energy Efficiency Advice Project (DEEAP).

Through this partnership, Abertay tenants received advice, help or payments totalling over £45,000 last year.

Some of the help available includes:-

Energy advice about which tariff is best for you

Help in switching energy supplier

Low energy light bulbs

Heating system demonstration

so you don't waste energy

Help with billing or fuel supplier problems

Benefit checks & help with unclaimed benefits

Eligibility check for Warm Home Discount of £140

Emergency fuel payment assistance (if applicable)

Help with white goods (if applicable)

If you need help – please do get in touch.

This service is **free** to Abertay tenants - just ring **DEEAP on 01382 434840** or e-mail **deep@dundeecity.gov.uk**



Helping Residents Switch Energy Supplier

Switching energy supplier can be one of the most effective ways to reduce household gas and electricity bills. The prices offered by various suppliers vary from time to time and it is recommended that options are reviewed every year or so.

Residents of Abertay Housing Association can now take advantage of a free advice helpline set up specifically to help simplify the process.

The service is independent of the utility companies.

If you would like to take advantage of this, call the freephone number on **0800 410 1262** with the following information to hand :-

- A recent electricity bill
- A recent gas bill if applicable
- Your approximate annual spend in electricity / gas (if known)

Further details can be provided at

www.switchmyenergy.co.uk

ARE **YOUR** HOME CONTENTS PROTECTED THIS WINTER?



Available to **Scotland's** tenants, is a **Home Contents Insurance** scheme that gives you the chance to insure the contents of your home in an easy and affordable way. There are many benefits and it's so easy to apply.

Ask your local housing officer for a free information pack or call Thistle Tenant Risks Insurance on 0345 450 7286.

Terms and conditions, limits and exclusions apply. A copy of the policy wording is available on request.



Thistle Tenant Risks is a trading style of Thistle Insurance Services Ltd. Lloyds Broker. Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. A JLT Group Company. Registered Office: The St Botolph Building, 138 Houndsditch, London, EC3A 7AW. Registered in England No 00338645. VAT No. 244 2321 96.



STAFF - Charity

In August, Abertay staff chose to take part in this year's Relay For Life. We took it in turns to walk around Caird Park for 24 hours to represent the fact that cancer never sleeps.

With our tents, picnics and wellies in hand we endured sun, rain and thunder & lightning, all with smiles on our faces (well mostly).

We set ourselves a target of £1,000 and with the help of cake sales, dress down day and donations from friends, family, staff & contractors we exceeded this and raised over £2,100.

A great day was had by all for an extremely worthwhile cause.



STAFF - Leaving

Anna

Moving to pastures new

After 3 years, Anna Lieske, our Welfare Officer is leaving in the new year.

Our team will still be able to help with benefit queries so please contact us on Tel No: 01382 903545.

Z przykrością zawiadamiamy, że niedługo Anna Lieske, nasz polski doradca zasiłkowy odchodzi z Abertay Housing. Nasz zespół będzie starał się być pomocny w każdej sprawie. Prosimy o kontakt pod numerem 01382 903545.

Ian Ross

After 5 years as Senior Project Officer, Ian is moving on to pastures new.

Ian has been involved in a number of major works programmes over this time.

We wish him and Anna every success in their new jobs.

Register Of Interested Residents

If you want to be more actively involved with Abertay Housing, however, do not want to be part of an official tenant group there are several ways that this is possible.

We are looking for residents who want to be active in Abertay's service provision to join our Register of Interested Residents.

If you join the register then you will be contacted as part of consultation on policies and invited to give feedback on various aspects of our services that you have received. You may be invited to various events including one-off focus groups.

Participation is voluntary and confidential.

If you feel you are interested in getting involved please contact Sharon Clinton on **01382 903545** or email her at: **Sharon.clinton@abertayha.co.uk**



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Getting In Touch

Telephone:

01382 903545

Fax:

01382 903575

Email:

queries@abertayha.co.uk

Newsletters: We are always on the lookout for contributions to our Newsletters. If you have any interesting articles or want to tell us something that is happening in your local area, please let us know and we will include it in a future newsletter.

