

HillcrestNews



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rmuir@hillcrestha.org.uk

WELCOME

Welcome to the Summer edition of your tenants' newsletter. This newsletter is produced twice a year and sent out to all tenants across Scotland. We have included news pages specific to your area as well as updates that will be of interest to all tenants.

We constantly review what's included in the newsletter so if you have any ideas about what you would like us to include or any ideas for changes please email rmuir@hillcrestha.org.uk.

A lot of articles give you the chance to get involved as a Hillcrest tenant so read on and find out more. Contact details are included where you have the chance to get involved.

Everyone at Hillcrest hopes you are enjoying your summer months.

Contact
Rebecca Muir
Publicity Officer, Hillcrest
rmuir@hillcrestha.org.uk

SWITCH OVER TO DIGITAL TV

From 4th August, if you live in Angus, Dundee, Perthshire or in St Andrews, Cupar or Newburgh in Fife, you will need a way of receiving a digital television signal. If you receive your television reception via an aerial, to continue viewing you will need to either buy a digital compatible TV or a set top box (eg a Freeview box). A set top box allows an older television to receive the digital signal.

If you receive television via a satellite dish or cable, you already receive a digital signal and the switch over does not affect you.

In preparation for the switchover, we completed the upgrading of receiving equipment for all our communal TV systems. This means that if you live

in a flat served by a communal aerial system, this will have been upgraded to receive digital TV.

If you live in a house or a flat with an individual aerial, the advice from Digital UK is that a rooftop aerial in good condition is capable of receiving digital signals. So, if you have good reception now, you are unlikely to need a replacement aerial.

Digital UK has asked us to say that any queries about the switchover from tenants or factored owners should be directed to their customer helpline. So, if you have any questions about how the digital switchover may affect you, you can call the **Digital UK customer telephone helpline on 08456 50 50 50** for assistance.

Help paying your rent

Are you on a low income?

Are you struggling to pay your rent or other bills?

Do you run out of money?

Are you paying too much for gas or electricity?

Our Money Advice Team can help by:

- Checking your benefits to make sure you get what's yours
- Help you budget your money
- Make arrangements to pay rent and other bills that are affordable
- Advising on energy efficiency and tariffs

People often don't know all the facts about their situation - here are a few myths:

- I cannot get help from Housing Benefit because I am working. **This is not true. Many people who work but are on a low income can still get help. Contact us and we can work out if you qualify.**
- I can't report a repair because I have rent arrears. **Everyone is entitled to request a repair whether in rent arrears or not - why not report the repair and get help with your finances from our Money Advice Team.**

- If I ignore my situation it will go away. **Doing nothing is usually the worst thing to do - you will feel better once you receive help.**
- I will get into trouble if I call the office - **our staff understand that everyone from time to time struggles with money and we are here to help, the sooner you call the better.**
- I can't speak to anyone as I work from 9-5 - **we are looking at ways you can discuss your situation with staff out with normal business hours.**

We have introduced a new email address which is accessible 24 hours per day for anyone who requires any help or information regarding their rent: renthelp@hillcrestha.org.uk

All we ask is that you include your name and address and if you would like us to call you please include your telephone number. If you do not have access to the internet we have a free-phone number for money advice: **08456 052368.**

We will get back to you as soon as possible with information and advice on your situation.



Angus Local News



Angus
Community
Mediation

LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR??

Summertime for many of us means lazy days in the sunshine and long BBQ evenings, but as Angus Community Mediation Service has discovered, summertime can also mean neighbour complaints.

These include loud music as windows are thrown open, abusive behaviour as tempers fray in the hot weather, and children screaming and shouting as they play out in the streets and gardens.

The Mediation service has tackled hundreds of disputes and nine out of ten, who go to mediation, are settled amicably.

The sooner you talk to your neighbour about the difficulties, the easier it is to try and resolve them. If you would like to speak to a mediator for free, confidential and impartial advice on the best way to try and sort things out for the future, call:

Angus Community Mediation

Tel: 01382 459252 Email: info@dundee.sacro.org.uk



Car Parking

Throughout our stock we have schemes with car parking facilities.

On these developments there are generally sufficient spaces for residents to park their cars. Spaces

are not allocated to residents, they are taken up on a first come first served basis and no space is guaranteed to any one individual. There can of course be spaces provided to tenants who lived in specially adapted properties.

Please advise all visitors that there are restrictions on the area and they should not park there.

Please be courteous to your neighbours and never block anyone in and always leave marked wheelchair spaces free for our disabled tenants.

Car repairs should not be carried out in the car park.

Commercial vehicles and caravans are prohibited.

Remember your car park is not a dumping ground for untaxed cars and abandoned vehicles. If your car is untaxed or abandoned, an order can be placed on the vehicle. This may result in your car being towed away.

Speeding

In some areas, speeding is causing us concern. With an increase in the volume of traffic and with so many young children in some schemes, we are pleading with drivers to drive with caution.

Unlawful parking

Cars are not permitted to be parked on the pavement or in undesignated areas. Police advise us if they are called out they will initially give a verbal warning and if this is not adhered to, further action will be initiated by Tayside Police.



TAG

TIMMERGREENS ACTION GROUP

Timmergreens Action Group was originally set up as a steering group in October 2009, the group worked hard to set up its committee and this was finally achieved in March 2010.

TAG was recently successful in gaining full recognition as a Registered Tenant Organisation with both Angus Council & Hillcrest Housing Association. Now that this has been achieved, the group are looking at ways of moving forward and arranged a meeting to ask the views of local residents.

If you didn't get the chance to go along to the meeting and you live within Timmergreens and are interested in assisting the group please contact Kevin on 07851 236796 or e-mail tagarbroath@hotmail.com.

TAG receiving their £200 from tenant participation fund to help start up their group



DUNDEE LOCAL NEWS

GRAFFITI

Did you know?????

Graffiti clearance by way of staff and materials costs Dundee City Council Waste Management Department approximately £73,100 per year. This is only the tip of the iceberg as many other City Council Departments, organisations, businesses and private individuals pick up the cost of graffiti removal either as it happens or as part of annual cleaning costs.

Graffiti is an offence; it is classed as vandalism and should always be reported to Tayside Police. The Police need to know what crimes or offences are happening in your area. During 2009 there were over 2000 crimes of vandalism reported. The actual amount of unreported crimes of vandalism, specifically graffiti, are estimated to be many times higher than this.

To report a crime please phone Tayside Police non emergency number –

0300 111 2222

Alternatively you can email them –
mail@tayside.pnn.police.uk

Individuals can obtain a graffiti removal kit to undertake graffiti removal at their own premises. The kit contains gloves, wipes, a scourer and heavy duty graffiti remover. If you want one of these kits, please contact Jeff Halkett at Dundee City Council on 01382 432729

Wishart Place Tenants' Association

Thanks to the hard work of this group, there have been a number of improvements to this area since they started in 2005.

It would be great to have more people involved in running the Association which was set up to benefit all the tenants at 1 to 9 Wishart Place.

If you live at 1 to 9 Wishart Place and would like to know more about how you can help the local group, please call 0844 8921 099 or email reception@hillcrestha.org.uk

Free fire Safety Checks

Every year in the UK there are:

- 63,000 house fires
- 14,000 people injured by fire and **500 DEATHS**.



The main causes of accidental dwelling fires within Tayside are:

1. Cooking
2. Smoking Materials
3. Electrical Appliances

In Tayside, over the past two years, alcohol has been a contributory factor in 50% of deaths in fires.

Safe as houses...?

Think fire can't touch you? Think you've got it covered? You're not alone – 3 out of every 4 Scots believe their home isn't at risk from fire.

But did you know that:

- You're twice as likely to die in a house fire in Scotland than in any other part of the UK?
- There are around 63,000 house fires in the UK every year?
- Around 500 people are killed in house fires every year and around 14,000 people are injured?

Ordinary people just like you. Maybe they never gave fire a second thought either ... until it was too late. Still think you've got it covered? Because it's often when you're busy – or just not thinking – that fire takes hold ... and takes a life.

Did you know.....?

Nearly 1 in every 4 house fires is caused by accidents while cooking?

- Do you take extra care when you're busy in the kitchen?
- Do you take special care when you're tired or when you've been drinking alcohol?

Nearly 4 in every 10 deaths in house fires are caused by people being careless with cigarettes and matches? And that many fires are started by children playing with matches and lighters left lying around the house?

- Are you always careful with cigarettes? Do you always empty your ashtray?

To help make sure that your house is safe, Tayside Fire and Rescue and Hillcrest Housing Association are working in partnership to promote Home Fire Safety Checks to tenants of Hillcrest Housing Association and to tenants of other landlords who use Hillcrest's services.

A Customer Service Assistant at Hillcrest, will contact Hillcrest tenants over the phone to enquire whether they would be interested in getting a free home fire safety check done by Tayside fire and Rescue. This information is then passed onto the Tayside Fire and Rescue who will contact the tenant to arrange a visit at a time which is most convenient to the tenant.

Alternatively you can contact Tayside Fire and Rescue direct:

Tel: 0300 123 9998

Text: 'Check' to 61611

www.taysidefire.gov.uk

During the visit firefighters will check each room of your house with you, helping you to make sure your house is safe.

This service is provided free of charge.

**DUNDEE HILLCREST
TENANTS' FORUM**
dundeehtf.org.uk



Would you like to join the Committee of the Dundee Hillcrest Tenants' Forum? The Committee is an independent group with its own office bearers.

DHTF works with Hillcrest staff to

improve housing and related services for all Hillcrest tenants in Dundee.

Want to find out more? please give Carol a call on 01382 346979 or email cpetrie@hillcrestha.org.uk



MAKING MONEY WORK

Making Money work is a project run by Hillcrest Enterprises (part of the Hillcrest Group) and is based at 15 Arbroath Road, Dundee. The project is funded through the Dundee Partnership via the Fairer Scotland Fund and the European Social Fund.

Making Money Work helps people in Dundee who are in the transition from benefits to employment or training by looking at any financial issues. So if you are thinking about coming off benefits and looking for work or moving into education you should give the team a call free on 0845 6052366.

The team helps by providing the following free confidential and impartial services:

- Better off calculations - for example – how much you would need to earn to be better off working
- Financial planning such as budgeting now and if your income changed
- Help with banking issues such as opening bank accounts and dealing with bank charges
- Managing and talking about debts
- Referring on to agencies who can help you find work
- Support and help on starting work such as advice on in-work benefits

You can call the team free from a landline on 0845 605 2366

Or drop in to the Discover Opportunity Centre in Crichton Street any day



BROOKSBANK CENTRE & SERVICES

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SECTION

Do you live in Dundee and have a child under the age of 5?

Are you in receipt of benefits or working tax credits due to low income?

FOR A SMALL NON REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT YOU CAN LOAN

Safety Gates - £2.00

Fire Guards - £2.00

Baby Listening Monitors - £5.00

YOU CAN BUY

Safety Packs - £2.00

Bath Sets - £2.00

Lockable Medicine Box - £2.00

Harness & Rein Set - £2.00

**INTERESTED? THEN CALL US ON 432452
E-mail: kiddiekaredundee@yahoo.co.uk**

EDINBURGH, PERTHSHIRE & FIFE LOCAL NEWS

Stop your energy bills overflowing... Want to know how saving water can also save you money?

The Energy Saving Scotland advice centre is taking part in an EU funded pilot project to give water saving advice. The pilot areas the project is running in are Edinburgh, Cardiff and London. So, as a resident in Edinburgh you can benefit from this service.

It's really simple: reducing the amount of water and energy wasted in your home will save you money and reduce your impact on the

environment. The great thing about saving water is that anyone can do it and it's really easy to do. Making small changes to how you use hot water can make a big difference to your energy bills.

The average household spends around 30% of their gas bill on heating water, which could be as much as £200 a year.

Hillcrest Housing Association and the Energy Saving Scotland advice centre want to let you know about ways to reduce your energy costs and carbon footprint. All you need to do is visit www.changeworks.org.uk/water.php to complete an online Water Energy Check and in return

you'll receive a free, personalised report in the post advising you of a number of easy ways to save water, energy and money.

There are five Energy Saving Scotland advice centres which are managed by the Energy Saving Trust and funded by the Scottish Government. In addition to the water saving advice given in Edinburgh, all of the advice centres are able to offer free, impartial and expert advice on energy efficiency, sustainable transport and small scale renewables. To speak to one of our advisors in about any of these topics please call us on freephone **0800 512 012**.

Tenants into Employment Project

We are pleased to be working with Fife Works to help our tenants in Fife into employment. Fife Works, an employability project, has been successful in setting up a new project to help unemployed tenants of Registered Social Landlord's. Fife Works staff can help unemployed people remove a number of barriers they might face when securing and sustaining both employment opportunities and tenancies.

Fife Works main aim is to improve the employability skills of unemployed people who are facing barriers to employment, through work experience, capacity and confidence building, short term training, and to increase numbers entering or re-entering the local labour market.

Fife Works will help you, by providing a specific service to help you move onto the road to employment.

We can help you into work or training by:-

- Providing information, advice and guidance
- Letting you know what's available locally
- Helping you identify your goals and remove barriers
- Organise and fund training courses
- Help with CV's and application forms.

For further information, please contact Fife Works on 01592 862304, or e-mail fifeworks@kingdomhousing.org.uk



IMPROVING BIKE SECURITY (EDINBURGH ONLY)

Lothian and Borders Police are promoting a cycle marking scheme to improve cycle security. The marking is intended to deter theft. If a bike is stolen and has been lodged in a database, bikes can be matched with their rightful owners if a bike is recovered by the police following a theft.

Throughout the summer, Police are running events at various locations throughout the City as 'bike marking events' and for a small fee of £5 (normally £10.95) you can have your bike marked.

If you have access to a computer then you can get more information by accessing www.bikeregister.com or visit your local Edinburgh office for more details.

On average there are 15/20 bike thefts in the City every week, and the Police are sending out a strong message to criminals by launching this initiative.

"Warm Welcome"

A warm welcome was given to our new tenants at Park Terrace, Aberuthven.

It was a cold March evening - the venue Aberuthven village hall- the event a welcome meeting for our new tenants organised and co-ordinated by Carol Annand, Community Housing Officer.

The informal gathering was opened by Neil McKnight, Area Housing Manager, who gave a historical and informative talk about the village of Aberuthven and Hillcrest Group.

This was followed by light refreshments and time to visit various information's stalls on Money Advice, Tenant Participation, Community Mediation, Energy Efficiency and Development/Maintenance.



Local Councillor Ann Gaunt came along to meet the new tenants and representatives from the local school and Community Mediation were present to answer any queries, give advice and "welcome" our new tenants.



Tenants' Contents Insurance

We are delighted to announce the launch of a new Home Contents Insurance scheme specifically designed for tenants.

Many tenants assume that we are responsible for insuring the contents of their homes. Only too late do they realise their own personal possessions are their own responsibility. We cannot pay for anything if your belongings are lost, stolen or destroyed.

Many people see insurance as a waste of money or low priority when moving into a new home. Often insurance premiums are paid annually via a bank account, which excludes anyone unable to pay in a lump sum or without a bank account.

Last year in the UK alone, burglaries, fires, burst pipes and flooding cost insurance companies £9,000,000. This is why it is important for you to take action to protect yourself from unseen risks.

We are aware that insurance can be expensive and sometimes insurance companies exclude tenants for various reasons. This is why we have negotiated a special arrangement with FARR Insurance, social housing specialists whose insurance policy is designed specifically for us with special premium

charges guaranteed for 3 years.

The policy covers all standard risks, which protect you if your house catches fire, is flooded or broken into. The premiums have been calculated to be one of the cheapest available and can be paid in instalments if you are unable to pay the annual charge all at once.

WHAT WILL IT COST?

The cost will depend on how much your possessions are worth. You will be able to calculate the cost by using the premium chart on the back of the proposal form.

HOW CAN I PAY?

To make it as easy as possible to pay the premium, FARR offer fortnightly or monthly payments by swipe card, available at the Post Office. Or if you have a bank account and prefer to pay monthly or annually by direct debit this can also be arranged.

How can I join the scheme?

For further information or advice please contact 0845 129 8034

MACMILLAN TAYSIDE WELFARE BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP

A Benefits Advice Service for people, families and carers affected by cancer

When you or someone close to you has been diagnosed with cancer, money might not be one of the first things you think about. But having cancer can be cause extra expense this can increase the anxiety people experience. That is why Macmillan Cancer Support has funded Benefit Advice Services throughout the UK. The Macmillan Tayside Welfare Benefits Partnership is a partnership between Angus, Dundee and Perth and Kinross Councils, Macmillan Cancer Support, and The Pension Service. The Partnership has staff based in Dundee, Angus and Perth.

We offer a free, confidential and impartial benefits and debt advice service.

Our advisers can help people to apply for benefits, cope with debt or financial problems, appeal against benefit decisions and access charitable grants. We can also signpost people to other services such as occupational therapy and home care.

We have outreach clinics at Roxburghe House, Dundee, Cornhill Macmillan Centre, Perth Royal Infirmary and at the 3 Macmillan Day Care Sites in Angus; Stracathro Hospital, Brechin, Whitehills Community Hospital, Forfar and Arbroath Royal Infirmary. A home visiting service can be offered if this is required.

For further information please contact: Yvonne Kelman, Senior Welfare Rights Officer - 01382 431173.

Hillcrest's New Number

We are improving our service to you by providing a new automated number. This will make it easier for you to get through to the correct person first time. You will only need to make a selection from one or two menus before being directed to your local office, our payments team or repairs team.

0844 892 1099

Calls to this number will be charged at 5p per minute from a BT landline. In line with all other numbers, calls from other networks may vary, and calls from mobile networks will be considerably more.

How to Contact Us

Dundee

Shed 26, Camperdown Street, City Quay,
Dundee DD1 3JA

Tel: **0844 892 1099**

Fax: (01382) 201772

dundee@hillcrestha.org.uk

Mon-Thurs: 8.45am - 5.15pm. Fri: 8.45am - 1pm

Arbroath

1 North Grimsby DD11 1NU

Tel: **0844 892 1099**

Fax: (01241) 877630

angus@hillcrestha.org.uk

Mon-Thurs 8.45am-12.30pm 1.30pm - 5.15pm.

Fri: 8.45am - 1pm

Perthshire/Fife

55 Huntingtower Road, Perth PH1 2LH

Tel: **0844 892 1099**

Fax: (01738) 630590

perth@hillcrestha.org.uk

Mon-Thurs 9am -12.30pm & 1.30pm - 4.30pm.

Fri 9-1pm

Edinburgh

126 Canongate, EH8 8DD

Tel: **0844 892 1099**

Fax: (0131) 558 9888

edinburgh@hillcrestha.org.uk

Mon-Thurs 8.45am - 1pm, 1.30pm - 5pm.

Fri 8.45am - 1pm

The number you should phone to report any repair is 08000 324 888. Outwith office hours this number should only be used to report emergency repairs that cannot wait to be reported until the next working day.

NEW WAY TO PAY YOUR RENT

As part of our continual commitment to improve the services we provide you, we are introducing Direct Debit as an additional and alternative method of paying your rent.



This service is available in all areas.

Direct Debit is a more convenient method of paying rent because once you have completed a mandate form and it has been passed to your bank, your rent payments will be deducted from your bank account on a regular basis depending on your frequency of payments.

We will notify you of any change to your monthly rent charge and your payment will be adjusted automatically by your bank.

You will be able pay your rent by direct debit on the 1st or 15th of each month.

If you do chose this method of payment, then you must have a current account with your bank, direct debits cannot be taken from a savings account. Please also remember that if a Direct Debit is returned as unpaid you will be charged by your bank.

If you would prefer to use this method of payment please contact your local office for a form.

Laminate Flooring – what do you think??

Over the years more and more tenants have replaced carpets with laminate flooring or ceramic tiles, which has also lead to an increase in noise complaints from people living in flats.

Currently we allow tenants to lay this flooring provided they seek permission and they agree to stick to our minimum specification for laying the flooring

When a carpet is removed and replaced with laminate or ceramic tile flooring it is likely that even with the minimum underlay the noise heard by a neighbour below will increase. Footsteps, chairs moved across the floor, noises from pets and children can quickly become an annoyance for neighbours downstairs and especially in properties that do not have great sound proofing such as old tenements.

If a tenant complains to us about the noise

from the flooring above we will arrange to have it inspected and if it does not have the agreed underlay or if the person did not ask for permission we can ask them to uplift and remove it all. However if the person has laid it correctly but is still causing a nuisance to the neighbour below then it can become very difficult to solve.

Some landlords including Dundee Council have already banned laminate and tiled flooring unless it is a ground floor flat or a house. Should we do the same? Should we refuse any new requests for laminate or tiled flooring in flats above ground floor?

We want to know what your views are on this. **Email repair@hillcrestha.org.uk**



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