

ALMONDVIEW

ALMOND HOUSING ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2018



AGM NEWS

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Discover the Story Starters

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Story Starters



Don't miss out on the Warm Home Discount

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Annual General Meeting

We were delighted to once again see so many of our members at our Annual General Meeting on 6th September, which took place in our offices in Etive Walk.

If you would like to take part next year, you can become a member of the Association. For more information, see the 'Getting involved' section at www.almondha.org.uk

Our Annual Report for 2018 is now available, please see the Downloads section of our website for a copy of the Annual Report in full.



Don't miss out on the Warm Home Discount

Have you contacted our Affordable Warmth Advisor Andy Price about the Warm Home Discount?

This is a Government scheme, regulated by ofgem, in which energy providers offer a £140 rebate on your Winter fuel bills – but most of us have to apply for it.

Andy can check if your supplier offers the WHD, if you qualify to receive it, and apply on your behalf. If you've missed the deadline to apply to your energy provider, or you're with a company which doesn't offer the WHD, you may still be able to claim by switching energy providers. But you'll have to be fast. Get in touch with **Andy** now on **07801 273994**.

Bats about our new development

AHA goes to great lengths to ensure our developments have a positive effect on their surroundings. But we've had to take unusual steps at our latest site – to check that we don't disturb any current residents.



In March we were delighted to purchase the disused St Paul's Church in Ladywell, a well-known local landmark which will be familiar to anyone travelling along Cousland Road. But the mature trees here are a favourite place for bats – meaning the old building presents an opportunity for nesting and roosting.

As responsible developers, AHA appointed specialists Ecology Consultants to carry out a number of surveys, to ensure that there are no bats roosting in the building.

They confirmed there were no bats in the belfry – or anywhere else for that matter. So the disused church building will now be demolished and a new development of 12 cottage flats and terraced houses will be built in its place.

And the original church bell will continue to ring, with The Church of Scotland planning to use it in another location.

As part of AHA's on-going commitment to provide high quality, safe and energy efficient homes for rent, the development team are committed to securing sites for new housing.

In recent years we have successfully secured a number of 'brownfield' sites at the heart of our local communities. Not only does this provide an opportunity for new housing where there is a demonstrated need, but it makes good use of existing land and lifts the general appearance of the area.

Our planning application is currently with West Lothian Council. All being well, we hope that the new homes will be ready by the end of 2019.



Story Starters and The Imagination Library

AHA is delighted to launch Story Starters – an exciting new programme designed to inspire a love of books from an early age. A team of skilled volunteers will work in small groups, with children under 5 and their parents, to bring storytelling sessions to life.

Books are not only great for a young person's imagination; they help them learn about the world, while developing language skills, confidence and independence. Which is why AHA signed up to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, an initiative which provides tenants with children under 5 with a free book, to keep, every month until the child's 5th birthday.

Now The Imagination Library has developed the Story Starters scheme – to support parents to turn a book into a whole new world of possibilities.

Story Starters is about more than reading a story out loud to a child. Volunteers are trained to use the book to develop games, songs, and discussions with children, to bring the story to life.

We need your help!

We need volunteers who can devote just one hour, once a week to read stories out loud and pass on the magic of books. We would also ask them to commit to attending a training session at AHA offices on Thursday 22nd November 2018 to become a Story Starter.



They will be professionally trained in listening and getting to know children, while using picture books as a context for learning, bringing stories to life through imagination and play. They will also learn how to help other parents gain confidence and feel comfortable reading stories out loud.

Get in touch now –

If you'd like to volunteer for our Story Starters project. Or to sign up for The Imagination Library. Contact **Barbara**, Your **Community Engagement Officer** on 01506 835272 / **07525 592313**.

Introducing the Riverside Community Fridge

The Riverside Community Wing is home to a brand new Community Fridge project.



Helen Davies of the West Lothian Youth Action Project, and AHA's Community Engagement Officer Barbara Boertien

Community Fridges are located in communal places, where surplus food donated by local businesses and individuals can be shared.

By purchasing the fridge, AHA hopes to give local residents the chance to access nutritious food, save money and reduce waste.

As well as locally grown vegetables from our community garden, a delivery of food is received weekly from Tesco, and a collection is made from Greggs. Produce may vary but will usually include: fresh fruit and vegetables, fresh pizzas, and yoghurts.

AHA's Community Engagement Officer Barbara Boertien said: "This project will benefit people of all ages who are affected by low income, providing access to fresh food and encouraging carbon wise decisions in terms of food purchase and food waste."

Contact **Helen Davies** on **07719 716913** or feel free to call AHA on 01506 439291 and speak to your Housing Officer to find out more.

We have a winner!

Congratulations to Mr and Mrs Murray of Esk Drive, who have won our Almond Award for this quarter! They were delighted to be presented with **£250 worth of vouchers** for Almondvale Shopping centre and Asda, by Housing Officer Amanda Gregory.



The draw is our way of thanking folks for keeping on top of their rent payments, taking care of their home and generally being a good tenant!

Our next Almond Award will be run in Winter 2018. All you need to do in order to be entered for the draw to win £250 worth of vouchers is to:

- 1** Have maintained a clear rent account for a minimum period of three months immediately prior to the draw
- 2** Not be involved in any anti-social behaviour in your area
- 3** Maintain your tenancy and any garden area to a satisfactory standard
- 4** Have allowed our contractor to gain access to your home to complete the annual gas check

Well done to Mr and Mrs Murray and a big thanks to all our tenants!

No room for domestic abuse!

AHA has a dedicated policy on domestic abuse, which can be found in the Downloads section of our website.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone, of any gender or sexuality, during a relationship or after it has ended.

AHA pledges to provide support and assistance to victims. We will listen and, with permission, refer them to specialist

support agencies such as Women's Aid and West Lothian Council's Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Service.



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY "OUT OF HOURS" REPAIRS: 0845 038 0040

Almond Housing Association	01506 439 291	Homeless Persons	0800 032 3450	Scottish Power (General)	0845 270 0700
Gas Leaks	0800 111 999	Howden Health Centre	01506 423 800	(Emergency)	0845 272 7999
Citizens Advice Bureau	01506 432 977	Litter Hotline	0800 616 446	St John's Hospital	01506 523 000
Craigshill Health Centre	01506 432 621	Police	101	Street Lighting	01506 280 000
Energy Advice	0808 808 2282	Refuse Collection	01506 280 000	West Lothian Council	01506 280 000