

# ALMONDVIEW

ALMOND HOUSING ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2024





## A message from John...

*Hi all and welcome to the summer edition of Almond View.*

*As we enter a new business year, I am pleased to advise that the Scottish Housing Regulator has again assessed Almond HA as being compliant meaning that we meet all regulatory requirements, including the Standards of Governance and Financial Management. Having noted the discovery of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in some of our homes towards the end of last year, the Regulator will be working closely with us and other landlords who have identified RAAC to ensure that progress is made to address the issue in those homes affected. We will of course continue to keep you updated. You may have seen or read articles in the media referring to homeowners who are in properties affected by RAAC. Whilst we very much empathise with the position of the homeowners concerned, the Association does not have any responsibilities or maintenance or repair obligations in relation to privately owned properties. Additionally, the Association's income is almost wholly from the rent that you, our tenants, pay. As a Registered Social Landlord regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator, we are unable to utilise income to meet costs incurred by homeowners.*

*This year, we have again sustained positive operational performance. A total of 25 out of the 36 (71%) indicators that we measured last year showed improvement at year end for 2023/24 from the previous year.*

*You will note from the article on page 3 that we celebrate 30 years of Almond HA this year. Established in 1994 to initially manage services for Livingston Development Corporation, following tenant ballot success, the Association has grown to become one of the largest independent Housing Associations in West Lothian. I am extremely fortunate and proud to lead an excellent team of people who have the skills, energy and commitment to enable us to continue to grow and to deliver excellent services.*

*As ever we are keen to include as many of our customers as possible in the development of our services. If you are interested in getting involved, please get in touch.*

*As ever please contact me at **john.davidson@almondha.org.uk** if you have a particular issue that you would like us to address or ideas on how we can do better as your landlord.*

John Davidson, Chief Executive



## Reporting Serious Concerns to the Regulator

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has recently published new guidance about raising serious concerns about your landlord. Any individual complaints must be raised with Almond HA in the first instance, however, if you have a serious concern and the complaint affects a group or all the landlord's tenants, you can report the issue directly to the SHR. A serious concern is when your landlord:

- has acted in a way which puts tenants' interests at risk and this affects, or could affect, a group of tenants or all tenants; or
- repeatedly fails to achieve outcomes in the Social Housing Charter or outcomes agreed with tenants; or
- has not reported its performance annually to its tenants or has reported it inaccurately; or
- does not meet the SHR's standards for how a social landlord should govern itself and manage its finances; or
- has not met any targets set for it by the SHR.

Serious concerns of this nature are considered to be Significant Performance Failures. Please contact us or visit our website for more information

[www.almondha.org.uk/your-views/complaints](http://www.almondha.org.uk/your-views/complaints)

Please note that a complaint between an individual tenant and a landlord is not a significant performance failure.



## Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete

In May 2024, we completed surveys of properties containing Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC). The Structural Engineers are preparing reports and recommendations to allow us to establish what monitoring or works may be required and we hope to be in a position to update customers concerned later this summer. We appreciate there is a lot of concerns and speculation but need to ensure we have all the information required before we can make necessary plans and update customers. We currently have no plans to demolish any properties because of RAAC.

# Doorbell cameras ... know your responsibilities



*For more information use the QR code above to access our Guidance for Ring Doorbells and Personal CCTV*

As domestic recording systems such as Ring doorbells become more commonplace, we recently published some guidance on our website about the responsible use of these. Our guidance is based on Domestic CCTV guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and outlines what is expected from you if you choose to install such device.

If your recording device captures images beyond your property boundary, then your use of the system is subject to the data protection laws. You can still capture images, but you will need to comply with your legal obligations as a data controller under the data protection laws. These include:

- Telling people that you are recording e.g. display signs.
- Regularly or automatically deleting footage and you must also ensure security of the footage.

- Stop recording a person if they object to it, e.g. restrict your camera coverage area or point in different direction as appropriate. You may have to provide some of your recording if asked by a person whose images you've captured.

The domestic use of Ring doorbells and such recording devices could be challenged if their use amounted to harassment, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. The relevance of the legislation would depend on the specific circumstances.

Please note that while you do not need to seek permission from us to install domestic recording devices such as Ring doorbells, if you are considering installing a traditional CCTV system to the exterior of your property, you must contact us to seek permission.

## 30 years of Almond HA

This year we're pleased to celebrate 30 years of Almond Housing Association. Without our customers, colleagues and partners, we would not be here to celebrate this fantastic milestone and we would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you.

We have come a long way since we initially managed services for Livingston Development Corporation and following ballot success, we're proud to have become one of West Lothian's largest independent Housing Associations. We have always placed homes and customers at the centre of everything we do and we would encourage you to get involved with our services and help us to continue to improve as we look forward to the next 30 years.

Follow us on social media and keep up to date with our newsletters as we celebrate throughout the year.



# We have a winner!

Congratulations to Julie Collins who has won our Almond Award for this quarter. Julie was delighted to be presented with **£250 worth of vouchers** for The Centre and Asda.



This draw is our way of thanking customers 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 **Autumn 2024**. To be entered for the draw to win **£250 worth of vouchers**, simply:

- 1 Maintain a clear rent account for a minimum period of three months immediately prior to the draw.
- 2 Ensure you have not been involved in causing anti-social behaviour in your area.
- 3 Maintain your tenancy and any garden area to a satisfactory standard.
- 4 Allow our contractors to gain access to your home where appropriate.
- 5 Be a member of our tenant consultation list. Contact us or visit our website to find out more and sign up.

*Well done to Julie and a big thanks to all our tenants!*

## Stock Condition Surveys

We carry out over 500 stock condition surveys every year and need to ensure we access every property for this survey at least once every 5 years. Providing access for a member of the team to complete this survey allows us to confirm the condition of items such as windows, kitchens and bathrooms to ensure our planned replacement dates are correct.

We have recently contacted customers who are due a stock condition survey of their property. If you have received a letter, please contact us to let us know when would be suitable to complete the survey.



## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

To report an emergency repair when our office is closed, please call 01506 439291 and select option 3 or contact the out of hours service directly on 0141 225 2842.

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