

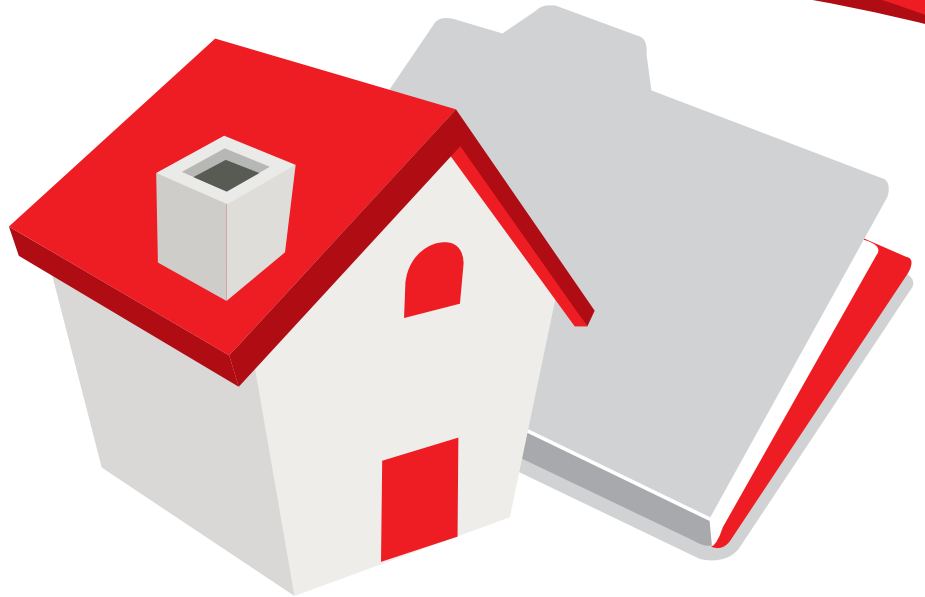
next step homes *news*

AGM Date

This year's Annual General Meeting for Langstane Housing Association and its subsidiary Next Step Homes, will take place in Langstane's offices at 680 King Street on Tuesday 22nd September.

The AGM itself will take place at 7pm and we are keen to encourage tenants to join the Association take part in the Annual General Meeting and if possible stand for election to the Committee of Management.

We will be organising events on the day of the AGM and we will give you more details nearer the time. In the meantime however anyone wanting to know more about what happens at the AGM or how to become a member of the Association or stand for the Committee of Management, he or she should get in touch with the Chief Executive Alan Grant on 01224 423004.



Information for Sharing Owners: *Home Reports*

As of 1st December 2008 anyone selling their home is required to provide a Home Report. Home Reports are designed to provide the buyer with more detailed information on the property and to allow the seller to make informed choices regarding the marketing of their home. A Home Report is made up of three separate documents;

- The Single Survey is a report prepared by a survey provider on the condition and value of the house.
- The Energy Report (likely to be prepared by the surveyor who has inspected the house) will provide you with an energy efficiency rating of the property together with some advice on how to cut fuel bills and increase the home's energy efficiency.
- The Property Questionnaire is completed by the seller and contains useful information about the house, such as alterations that may have been made, factoring costs and council tax banding.

For more detailed advice on Home Reports you can visit The Scottish Government website and find it under "Built Environment_Housing_ Buying and Selling_Home Report".

STAFF NEWS

"I Say Hello"



A warm welcome to **Marcie Ballance** our new Business Development Officer. Marcie is a qualified architect and joined us from McColl Architects. Prior to that she worked for 8 years in the Development Department at Castlehill Housing Association and we are delighted to benefit from her wealth of experience.

"In House Moves"



Welcome also to **Lisa Cameron** our new full time Housing Officer for NSH's tenants and sharing owners, who can be contacted to deal with your queries on 01224 423106. Lisa was previously a member of the 1st Response team.

Upcoming Developments Hillside Hotel, Portlethen

Next Step Homes have recently started work on a development of 22 x 3 bed houses (all with downstairs bedroom) at the former Hillside Hotel site in Portlethen.

These houses will be for sale through the New Supply Shared Equity scheme and are a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced properties forming an attractive development on a no-through street – ideal for families. Work started on site at the end of April and is scheduled for completion in April 2010.



A warm welcome to our new tenants at Belmedie!

In line with Next Step Homes' commitment to developing different tenure types, we recently acquired 32 one and two bedroom, mid-rent flats in Egie Crescent/Pettens Close, Balmedie – complete with sitting tenants! We would like to take this opportunity to welcome them to Next Step Homes.

vacancies which may arise in the future at this development please contact Lisa Cameron at Next Step Homes on 01224 423106 to request an application form.



Household Money Saving Tips

With the credit crunch in full swing here are a few tips we've gathered to help reduce household costs:

- Shop around for the best prices for electricity, gas, internet and insurance policies. Websites like Uswitch and Money Supermarket do all the hard work for you and help you ensure you're getting the best value for money
- Declutter and sell you're unwanted goods at a car boot sale or on Ebay. If the goods are not worth money, consider giving them away – see our article on Freecycling.
- Don't spend money on harsh chemical cleaners. Mix equal parts of water and white vinegar together and pour into a clean spray bottle for a multi-surface cleaner that is effective, anti-bacterial and cheap. (Test on surfaces before using) For more 'recipes' visit www.vinegartips.com

- Write a shopping list before you visit the supermarket and don't be tempted by multi-buy offers, especially for perishable items like fruit and veg, unless you really will use the items. £889m worth of food is wasted in Scotland every year. That's £410 per household and half of that wasted food was probably edible!
- Store food correctly so it lasts longer. Tomatoes last longer out of the fridge whilst herbs, vegetables, bread, milk and grated cheese can all be frozen if you won't use them before their 'use by' date.

If you have any tips you'd like to share, let us know.



Change to Insurance Contact Details

Jardine Lloyd Thomson's contact details have changed. They can now be contacted on:

JLT Claims
PO Box 632
Cardiff
CF11 1LG

Tel: 0845 605085

Email: jltclaims@cl-uk.com







Tenants Forum

As part of our commitment to encourage feedback and participation from our tenants and sharing owners we now have a Tenants' Forum up and running on our website for both Next Step Homes and Langstane Housing customers. The forum offers you a chance to ask us questions or to discuss issues with other customers. Simply visit www.langstane-ha.co.uk and follow the link to the Tenants' Forum. Let us know what you think!



Performance Figures for 2009

Every year the Association has to report performance figures to the Scottish Government. A summary of some of the key information is as follows:

No of units owned:

-  40 rental units
-  84 Shared Ownership

Arrears Performance

-  Current rent arrears(as a percentage of total rental income) 3.81%
-  Former Tenant rent arrears 1.23%

Repairs Performance

Category	% completed within target timescale
Emergency	100%
Urgent	63.64%
Routine	70.73%

Important Information

Regarding Paying by Direct Debit

The Association has changed it's provider for direct debits, which will now be administered by allpay.net. This will be the name that will show on your bank statement should you decide to pay your rent by this method.

The new system provides greater flexibility as you can now opt to pay your rent weekly, fortnightly or monthly and can specify the date you wish your direct debit to start from.

Please visit our website to download the form and when you have completed it post it into our office for processing. Please note, there is one for LHA tenants and one for Next Step Home tenants. Alternatively, you may like to telephone us and we can set up your direct debit immediately without requiring a signature from you.



Stay safe from fire Check your smoke alarm

Although 80% of the population own smoke alarms, statistics show that in one in every eight fires attended by Fire and Rescue Services the smoke alarm failed to work, mostly due to flat or missing batteries (Communities and Local Government Fire Statistics). Your smoke alarm is the 1st line of defence against fire. Test your smoke alarm once a week and replace the battery once a year.

Office Opening Hours

Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm
(Aberdeen and Elgin)

Aberdeen Offices are closed between 9.00am – 12 noon on the last Wednesday of each month for staff training.

Office Closure

Langstane's Offices will be closed on the following days over the next few months

Monday 14th July 2009

Friday 25th September 2009

Monday 28th September 2009

Friday 25th December 2009

Monday 28th December 2009

Tuesday 29th December 2009

Wednesday 30th December 2009

Thursday 31st December 2009

Friday 1st January 2010

If you need assistance reading this newsletter, please let us know so that arrangements can be made.

You have the right to make a complaint about any aspect of our service to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Any such complaint must be submitted within 12 months of the day you first had notice of the matter you wish to complain about.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7HS.
Tel: 0870 011 5379, email: enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk
website: www.scottishombudsman.org.uk



Have you considered freecycling your unwanted goods rather than consigning them to the refuse centre?

Freecycle - A Brief History

On May 1st, 2003, Deron Beal sent out the first e-mail announcing The Freecycle Network™ to about 30 or 40 friends and a handful of non-profit making organisations in Tucson, Arizona. At the time Deron founded The Freecycle Network, he worked with a small nonprofit organization, RISE, which provides recycling services to businesses and residents in need.

Rather than watching perfectly good items being thrown away, the founder members found themselves calling around to see if various local businesses and residents could use them. Thinking there had to be an easier way, Beal set up that first Freecycle e-mail group in a way that permitted everyone in Tucson to donate and receive goods. Freecycle was up and running.

The Freecycle concept has since spread to over 85 countries, with thousands of local groups representing millions of members -- people helping people. As a result, we are currently keeping over 500 tons a day out of landfills! By giving freely with no strings attached, members of The Freecycle Network help instill a sense of generosity of spirit as they strengthen local community ties. People from all walks of life have joined together to turn trash into treasure. Log on to www.freecycle.org to find your nearest freecycle network. Offer your unwanted goods and find yourself a treasure.

If You Have A Story To Tell we would like to hear from you

We are always looking for features to publish in future editions of the 'Langstane News'. If you have a story, any household tips or even recipes that you would like to share with other tenants of Langstane then please get in touch with Susan George on **01224 423152**.