

Tenantmatters

'MEETING EACH HOUSEHOLD'S ASPIRATIONS'



MANORESTATES
Housing Association

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Our home and virtual offices will be closed on the following dates:

- Friday 15th April and Monday 18th April
- Monday 2nd May
- Thursday 2nd June and Friday 3rd June
- Friday 1st July and Monday 4th July

While the office is closed, you can still access our emergency repairs service by contacting the following numbers:

For all gas and central heating repairs, contact **Lothian Gas** on **0131 440 4666**

For all other repairs, contact **Novus** on **01506 242 120** or **0131 510 8540**

- Please note that staff will be unavailable between 9.00am and 11am every Wednesday for staff training.

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0131 510 8540

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FOR INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE!



www.manorestates.org.uk

WELCOME TO OUR SPRING NEWSLETTER

★ Welcome to our Spring newsletter. I am delighted to see the whole of the country starting to emerge from the shadow of covid and tentatively turning the corner back to some sense of normality.

Although I think it may take all of us some time to adjust to living with covid, it is good to do it with the backdrop of brighter mornings and evenings and even some sunshine.

We are now starting to think about when we can open things back up and start home visits again. We will keep the situation under review and ensure that when it is safe to do so, we will start returning to our normal range of services. We will keep you all updated via the website, social media and our

newsletters. It may take us a bit of time to catch up with repairs and some planned work programs whilst we still juggle staff and contractor absences as a result of covid and supply issues but we will get there.

As always, the staff at Manor Estates, will continue to work extremely hard on your behalf, ensuring that we provide excellent customer service at all times.

On behalf of all the staff and the Board at Manor Estates stay safe and healthy.

BOARD NEWS

As you will already know, the Association is governed by a Board made up of volunteers who bring a range of skills and experience to the organisation.



- ★ The Board meets at least eight times per year, usually on the last Wednesday of each month.

The Board's main remit is to agree strategic plans for the future of the Association, keep a close eye on financial issues and monitor performance against targets in key areas.

Recent issues considered by the Board include:

- Approval of the Association's Strategic Plan 2022 to 2027
- Approval of the Budget for 2022/23
- Review of how we comply with regulatory standards, as set by the Scottish Housing Regulator

All of the work that the Association does is monitored by the Scottish Housing Regulator. One of their requirements is that each year the

Board has to submit an **Annual Assurance Statement**

The statement confirms that the Board is confident that the Association complies with the standards set out by the Regulator, based on information provided by staff throughout the year.

The last assurance statement was submitted in October 2021 – you can access a copy on our website:- **2021-Assurance-Statement**

More information about the Board is available on our website where you can also view minutes of recent meetings

<https://www.manorestates.org.uk/tenants/publications/>

- If you have any queries or comments regarding the Association's Board, please contact Carolyn Hughes.



Geoff

INTERVIEW WITH A BOARD MEMBER

- ? How long have you been a MEHA tenant**
I have been a MEHA tenant since April 2000
- ? How long have you been on the Board at MEHA**
I joined the board in September 2020
- ? Why did you want to join the Board**
My main aim of joining the board was to be more involved in shaping the progression of the board's involvement with tenants
- ? What is the best part of being on the Board**
I think the best part is every meeting is different, with different challenges, some good and some not so good but it's the discussions we have that are important and agreeing on a shared way forward
- ? Why should other tenants get involved with the Association whether on the Board or as part of the armchair panel**
I think more tenants should involve themselves as it's an eye opener on what goes on behind the scenes and being in a position to be able to discuss issues and move items forward
- ? What experience have you brought to the Board**
I think because I had experience of void management in my job before I retired it's been an asset to be able to steer and input my ideas to the Board, obviously all Housing Associations work differently but the actual problems are faced at all levels
- ? Have you learnt anything new as being part of the Board**
Yes, all members bring different aspects to the Board where some lengthy discussions take place, my views – as with all the members - are taken on board and sometimes a vote is required. At the end of the day, it's an enjoyable time and I look forward to serving out my time on the board

● If any other tenants are interested in being more involved please contact Carolyn Hughes on 0131 510 8540

STAFF CHANGES

The Association has had a number of staff changes in recent months – details below.

Property Services Team

We are very pleased to let you know that **Ward Linney** joined the team in November 2021 and his role has been to assist us in the areas of contract and procurement.

Jackie Wright retired as Factoring coordinator in December 2021. Jackie was one of our longest servicing members of staff having been with us at the very start of Manor Estates back in 1995. We wish her well for the future. **Cathy Cockburn**, one of our Property Administrators, has been recently appointed as our new Factoring Coordinator we wish her every success in her new role.

Louise Stevendale, Property Services Administrator, left the Association at the end of February 2022. Louise was a valued and respected member of the team and we wish her all the very best.

Corporate Services Team

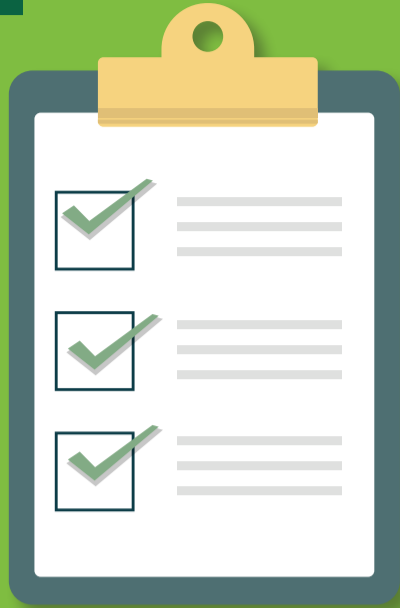
Mandy Neill joins our team on 7th March 2022 as our Part-Time Corporate Services Assistant. Mandy replaces **Iona Robertson** who left in November for ventures new and we wish Iona well.

Neil Wardrope joins our team on 14th March 2022 as our ICT Officer. Neil will be replacing **Graham Golding** who we have had the pleasure of working with for the last 4 years. Graham will be retiring in July and we would like to wish him well for the future.

We welcome all our new staff to the Association and look forward to working with them all in the coming months.

EQUALITIES POLICY REVIEW

You may recall that in our last newsletter we spoke about reviewing how well we comply with the Scottish Social Housing Charter requirements in respect of equalities.



A summary of what we have established is noted below.

THE STANDARD



Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:
every tenant and other customer have their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

Currently, we seek to comply with the standard in a number of ways, including:

- Providing written information in alternative formats or languages;
- Arranging interpreters when engaging with customers whose first language is not English;
- Regularly review policies and procedures to ensure that they do not result in discrimination against any individual or group;
- Arrange for adaptations to be carried out in tenants' homes to ensure they can continue to live there rather than having to move;
- Allocating properties that have been adapted to those who will benefit from the adaptation.

We recognise that we need to look at what else we could be doing to ensure equality of opportunity for people to access all our services. We are now carrying out a full review of our Equalities Policy and have a working draft available.

The review (and associated action plan) will also outline how we will approach new Regulatory requirements in respect of collection of equalities data.

● If you would like to discuss the draft Policy with us, or if you have any comments on the points made in this article, please contact Carolyn Hughes by Friday 15 April 2022.

HOUSEHOLD DETAILS AND THE HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2014

You may recall that there have been changes to the conditions of your tenancy that were introduced as a result of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 which came in to effect on 1 November 2019.

● These are important changes to the terms and conditions of your tenancy with this Association.

It is important that you keep us updated on who lives in your household. We will be beginning a new programme to send out household details forms to all our tenants for you to return with any changes.

● It is extremely important that you notify us immediately if anyone moves in or out of your home. We can only take account of any changes from the date you notify us and this could affect future tenancy issues, for example, who would be able to succeed to the tenancy following the death of the tenant.

If you have any queries about this matter or are unsure what you should do, please contact the Housing Management Team on **0131 510 8540**.

NEW PHONE NUMBER -

0131 510 8540

Manor Estates has installed a new phone system to improve our telephone service and support post-covid flexible working.

We have a new number **0131 510 8540**. You will see this number when we phone you.

You can still call us on our 0800 number, but we would appreciate you using the **0131 510 8540** number if your phone package includes calls.

When you phone, you will be asked to select an option.



Options 1, 2 and 3 will connect you at any time:

Option 1	Repairs (Novis)
Option 2	Gas Repairs (Lothian Gas)
Option 3	is for payments. With your 13 digit AllPay card number, you can make payments over the phone.

The other options will put you through during office hours.

Option 4	is the Property Services Team
Option 5	is for the Housing Team
Option 6	is for the Owners Team
Option 9	will tell you about opening ours and office closures

Once you have chosen an option, rather than waiting in a queue, you can press 2 to request a callback or leave a message which is emailed to the team you selected. Please include your name and the address you calling about in any message.

SCOTTISH WATER

NATURE CALLS. BIN THE WIPES.



A new campaign by Scottish Water is asking people to 'bin the wipes'. Many wipes contain plastic, meaning they don't break down in the sewer and can cause blockages.

Climate change brings heavier rainfall. As sewers become overwhelmed, household waste products – wipes, sanitary items, nappies – can escape into our rivers and end up on our beaches. Not just unpleasant, this is harmful to the environment and the wildlife we share it with.

Time for a Ban

Like many people, you probably didn't realise that many wipes you buy contain plastic. We don't think that's right. Therefore, Scottish Water are calling for a ban on wipes that contain plastic being sold. Plastics in our environment cause harm to animals directly and indirectly through their food chain. To find out more and to back the ban, please visit JoinTheWave.scot/ban.

How Big is the Problem?

Every year Scottish Water teams attend over 36,000 blockages in drains and sewers, which could cause flooding in homes and neighbourhoods, pollute rivers, burns and coastal waters.

80% of these blockages are caused by people flushing the wrong items down the toilet, or pouring fats, oil and grease down the sink.

How You Can Help Prevent Blockages

It's easy really. Just remember the 3Ps rule. Only flush (toilet) paper, pee and poo. Nothing else should go down the toilet. Make sure all other items, including wipes go in the bin!

PLANNED MAINTENANCE WORKS



The Association's Board recently approved the following Planned Maintenance Programme for 2022/23:

Gas central heating & boiler renewals	Tressilian Gardens & various others
Kitchen upgrading	The Bowling Green, Leith, South Queensferry Hopetoun & North Scotstoun.
Bathroom upgrading	Ratho, Muirhouse Bank, Balerno & others
Door replacements	Great Junction St, Bangor Rd, Leith & others.
Balcony doors	Niddrie Mill
Flat Doors	Commercial Street, Muirhouse Place East & West, Great Junction Street, Bangor Road, various properties in North Scotstoun, South Queensferry.
5 Year electrical safety checks	across various estates
Loft insulation top ups	across various estates
External Maintenance Painterwork	Muirhouse Place East & West, The Bowling Green, Great Junction Street, Leith, Sutherland Street, Sandilands

If your home is included in this year's programme you will receive a confirmation letter over the coming months giving details of the proposed works. If you have any queries regarding this years' programme please contact our Property Services.

Planned Contract Programme Adjustments

If you watch the news at the moment, you will know that we are potentially facing a difficult period with rising costs and sometimes disrupted supply chains. At Manor Estates, we have been trying to manage the situation so we do not pass any disruption on to you, our tenants. Unfortunately, we have had to take the decision to delay some of our planned programme of improvements over the next few months. We are not cancelling the work to your properties; we are having to delay it slightly. The contracts affected are:

- 25 Bathrooms
- 28 External doors
- External décor to 14 blocks of flats

If you are going to be affected by any of these changes, we will contact you by 30 April 2022 to advise of the revised timescale for the works to be started.

As we go through the year, other contracts may be delayed, we will notify you as soon as we become aware

RUBBISH DUMPING

We continue to see an increase in rubbish being dumped by residents in the common stairs and communal areas.

We would like to remind residents that rubbish should **NOT** be dumped anywhere on the estate especially in the common stairs. Rubbish includes items like old furniture and sofas.

There are also a lot of items being stored in common stairs including prams and children's toys - this can cause issues where a common stair is an emergency access in case of a fire.

You can help prevent rubbish fires by following our advice:

- Store your rubbish in a secure area if possible
- Keep your garage and shed locked as well as your home
- Keep all flammable liquids locked away
- Consider installing security lighting outside
- Be alert to strangers loitering in your street and call the police if strangers are loitering for some time
- Report any build-up of rubbish or fly-tipping to Edinburgh Council on www.edinburgh.gov.uk/litter-flytipping/flytipping. This will help ensure it can be removed and prevent fires
- Warn other people if a fire breaks out. Then get out, stay out and call the fire and rescue service out by ringing **999**

Remember not to:

- Allow rubbish to block escape routes
- Store rubbish by doors, windows or any other openings
- Store bins or sacks up against your home as fire can quickly spread to buildings
- Overfill your bin or leave rubbish around it
- Smoke in or around storage areas
- Put bins out for emptying until the day your refuse is collected
- Fly-tip materials or leave rubbish to build up outdoors – it could start a fire
- Accept deliberately fire-setting in your community. It's a crime that threatens lives – report it to the police

Please be careful and considerate when disposing of your refuse and recycling.

- If a crime is being committed, or is about to be committed, or if there is a risk of serious injury, or if the fire and rescue service is needed, call **999**.
- If you have any items you need to dispose of you can arrange an uplift at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/specialuplift or visit www.edinburgh.gov.uk/recycling-3 for details on how to recycle unused items.



CONTACT MANOR ESTATES HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD.

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Web: www.manorestates.org.uk




You can follow us on **Facebook** and **Twitter** - **@ManorEstatesHA**

PAYING YOUR RENT

Have your circumstances changed or has your income reduced?

★ We understand that the current pandemic has put a strain on finances however we would encourage you to think twice about delaying your rent or arrears payments. People who opt to miss their regular payments then struggle to catch up with the missed payments meaning arrears continue to increase.

If you are experiencing difficulties paying your rent, please contact your Housing Officer immediately. We will try to help you reach a reasonable arrangement to pay any debts by instalment and we can also refer you to our Welfare Rights Service or Changeworks for support.



WORRIED ABOUT THE INCREASE IN ENERGY COSTS?

For many of our tenants, fuel poverty is a real issue. We know that winter can be a really hard time when it comes to heating your home whilst keeping an eye on the bills.

The recent increase in energy costs is also concerning. This will mean that many low-income and vulnerable families may have to limit their energy usage which can lead to poor health and suffering.

We know that this will be a very anxious and worrying time of year and many tenants are worried about how they will manage any increased outgoings. If you are struggling please read on for some advice.

Maximise your Income

Make sure you are claiming the correct benefits. This could increase your income as well as make you eligible for other types of assistance. We are working in partnership with CHAI on providing debt advice. If you think you would like a referral speak to your Housing Officer.

Avoid Damp and Condensation

When it is cold, condensation can be a big problem in many homes. Try the following:

- Try to keep temperatures in all rooms above 15°C in colder weather. This will reduce condensation forming on outside walls
- Insulate your home
- Keep your home ventilated. Make sure vents and air bricks are not covered or obstructed
- Try not to dry washing in the house. If you do, use an airer and don't dry clothes on radiators. Opening windows slightly will allow moisture to escape but be aware of security
- Open window trickle vents during the day or when going out
- Wipe down windows/mirrors/tiles/shower with an absorbent cloth
- Open windows after bathing or washing and leave them open for a short while to release steam if it is safe to do so.

● If you are worried about fuel costs get in touch and we can refer you to Changeworks for advice and support. Act now and get in touch.