

# The TRUST Fund

**Taking  
Responsibility  
Uniquely  
Supporting  
Tenants**

By: Jim Banks & Alli Vass,  
Customer Services Managers

What is the TRUST Fund? The name says it all: Albyn are Taking Responsibility and Uniquely Supporting Tenants through a new fund. One of our core values is to make a difference and improve the lives of our tenants, and this is another way we can help support those most in need.

This annual fund approved by the Board has been designed to replace the Hardship Fund launched during the pandemic, transitioning from an application-based award system with set criteria to Housing Officers and Assistants overseeing funds for their area, and a dedicated amount for specific projects.

The total budget for the fund is £60,000, with £20,000 of that amount set aside for major projects such as income maximisation programmes and support for tenancy sustainment. For the remainder, Housing Officers will receive £1,500 per patch, and Housing Assistants will be responsible for £500.

Albyn are confident in the Housing Team's intimate knowledge of their patches and that this resource will be put to good use. Should you have an exceptional need, please contact your Housing Officer or Housing Assistant to see if they can help.

It should be acknowledged that the fund is not unlimited, however, it is Albyn's hope that it will benefit our individual tenants and communities significantly moving forward, even if it is with something small, as we have learned through the pandemic that sometimes the small things are, in fact, the big things.

Examples of ways the fund can be used include:

- Microwave for tenant who suffers from anxiety when using a cooker.
- Support with electricity bills due to tenant losing their job.
- Purchase of school uniform after mid-year growth spurt.
- Mobile phone top up to allow tenant to remain digitally included.

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# Autumn Newsletter Welcome!



Welcome to our Autumn 2021 edition of Newsview!

We will be issuing newsletters more regularly in an attempt to engage with our customers more frequently, and to hear what your priorities,

needs, and aspirations are, as well as updating you on all the exciting work that is going on in Albyn – none more so than us delivering our first post-COVID new build properties (more information on page 14). I am also delighted that we have issued another Customer Satisfaction Survey, which should have reached you by the time you receive this newsletter. We are committed to hearing from you, learning from you, and responding to your feedback on our services. What you can expect in coming months is a drive to engage with each of you further across all of our service areas. We are keen to hear from each of our customers to enable us to provide even better service delivery in the way that fits you best.

As we are emerging from COVID-19, and whilst the threat of increased pressure on the NHS over winter is with us, we have decided not to reopen our offices until 2022. We have made this decision based on the best interests of our customers, staff, and contractors. However, you can still contact Albyn by phone, email, and request a home visit if required. We will keep you informed of any changes to this position and are keen to hear your preference for service delivery through our customer satisfaction survey.

Many of the staff we have introduced are involved in projects in this edition, such as the bathroom replacements in the

article, “We Work Together for You!” and “New Development Updates.” We hope you will feel a greater sense of connection in being introduced to the people who are working for Albyn, and we plan to do more of this in the future.

Since our last newsletter, there have been changes to our leadership. I have been appointed as the Interim Group Chief Executive from the Director of Customer Services role, after our previous Group Chief Executive stepped down, as did the Chair of our Board. I am pleased that this had not caused any interruption in service to tenants and that we continue to be driven by our continued mission of providing affordable, high-quality homes to people who need them, as well as excellent customer service. I will be in position until we have recruited a permanent Group Chief Executive in 2022.

As always, I am keen to hear of any feedback or suggestions you have in relation to our future newsletters.

Best wishes,

Kirsty Morrison  
Interim Group Chief Executive



## Routine Repairs Update



In the summer edition of Newsview, we shared that there was a backlog of approximately 2,000 routine repairs due to the pandemic and lockdown.

We are pleased to share that the backlog has been completed. It was our goal to sort repairs for each of you as quickly as possible. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

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# Volunteer to Help Us Improve Our Service

By: Lucy Fraser, Head of Innovation

To enable us to deliver the best possible customer service, we need to make sure we review our current work practice and identify where we can improve our service delivery to you.

To do that effectively, we need tenants to volunteer to work with us to review what we currently do and help us to identify improvements on the current system.

The best way to do this is to involve both tenants and staff, to identify what is working well and what is not working well and highlight areas we need to improve. We also need to make sure that whatever monitoring system we set up does not involve large time commitments from participants but is still effective.

## We are proposing to set up a Performance Monitoring Group.

- The Performance Monitoring Group (PMG) will be made up of staff and tenants.
- Every year in April the PMG will review our Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) looking at our performance over the past 12 months.
- The PMG will then collectively agree 3 areas to review and improve from the ARC over the following 12 months.
- Each area being reviewed will follow the same process:
  - an initial face to face meeting of the PMG to identify areas needing improvement.
  - further consultation with tenants and staff to establish what changes are necessary.
  - a final virtual meeting to ratify any changes identified and agree a monitoring framework and timetable.

The initial face to face meeting will cover the following:



1. Look at performance data, complaints / compliments results, information from TP activity and ask the question, "What is this telling us?"



2. Hear from the staff involved (managing and delivering – including contractors to:
  - a. Hear / discuss the service delivery process
  - b. The targets – times, standards, etc.
  - c. What tenants are telling these staff members



3. List and discuss issues the scrutineers have picked up.



4. Agree further consultation with tenants / staff.

There will then be further consultation with tenants over the findings and changes that are proposed. The replies will be fed back to the final virtual meeting where the PMG will discuss:



1. What the consultation activities found.



2. Issues the scrutineers have picked up.



3. Priorities, recommendations, and actions.



4. A draft implementation plan for any changes and timescales.

Once agreed, the implementation plan will be published and progress flagged over the following 12 months.

## Volunteers – We need your help!

We are looking for a number of tenant volunteers to help us run this first pilot. You do NOT need to have any particular experience or skills – you are already a skilled tenant, and it is your views as a tenant that we are wanting to hear. As a volunteer, you will:

- Work closely with Albyn staff to identify where we could improve our performance as your landlord.
- Get the information and support you will need to be able to fully participate in the group.

- Get access to ICT to enable you to fully participate with the group.
- Be eligible for travel and subsistence expenses when away from home.

To volunteer to join this group, email or phone Anne/Lucy on [anne.mackay@albynhousing.org.uk](mailto:anne.mackay@albynhousing.org.uk) and [lucy.fraser@albynhousing.org.uk](mailto:lucy.fraser@albynhousing.org.uk) and 07894568185 or 07740257857.



# Get to Know Us...



## **Maureen Knight, Interim Director of Customer Services**

"I joined Albyn in September 2021 and am looking forward to delivering a much-improved customer service experience. I have worked in social housing for 37 years and am committed to listening to our customers and shaping our services to meet your needs and aspirations.

In coming months, we will review customer service policies & develop a new customer handbook that will detail what our policies and procedures will mean to you. The Customer Service Team will be engaging more with you as we need you to tell what you think & what you would like us to do. This will help us shape the services we provide you."

## **Jim Banks, Customer Services Manager – North**

"I am the Customer Services Manager for the North Team, based in Invergordon. We provide the Housing Management and day-to-day maintenance service for roughly half of the Society's housing stock from the Black Isle Northwards, right up to Durness on the West Coast and Thurso in the East.

I joined Albyn 26 years ago, initially as the Property Services Manager before moving into mainstream housing management. I strongly believe that housing associations are at the peak of social housing provision and am immensely proud of the work that we do providing warm, well-maintained homes for our tenants."



## **Alli Vass, Customer Services Manager – South**

"After working for 17 years in the corporate world, I realised that I wanted to work in an industry where people came first. I have been working with Albyn for 10 months and am passionate about developing the right culture to encourage positive improvements for our staff and tenants alike.

The South Team supports our tenants from a base in Inverness, looking after a vast geographic area. We have properties in the south including Fort Augustus, and Aviemore, properties in the west including Beaulieu and properties in the east including Nairn."

## **Laura Bradley, Highland Residential Manager**

"Hi, my name is Laura Bradley. I just wanted to take a moment to introduce myself. I am the Operational Manager for Highland Residential (Mid-Market Rent and Factoring).

A bit of information about me: I grew up in Manchester. After meeting my husband, we moved to Plymouth where we lived for the past 16 years, until undertaking the move to the Highlands in September. I have over 14 years in corporate property experience and have a strong customer focus. I am here to support the teams within Highland Residential. We have worked very hard to improve the customer focus within the Factoring department and are currently undertaking site visits to ensure every development is in the best condition possible before the winter sets in."



## **Sean Currie, Estates and Development Manager**

"Hello, everyone. I took up the post of Estates & Development Manager in August. Professionally, I'm a Chartered Surveyor originally from a Building Surveying background, but from the mid-2000s I have primarily focused on Asset Management/Planned Maintenance for several RSLs. This was initially as a consultant, leading me to work directly for several RSLs, then later as a Property Director for a Factoring business in Edinburgh.

I am focused on designing and building our homes to a standard which minimises maintenance requirements and maximising sustainability in our activities."

# We Work Together for You!



Albyn staff work together in many areas to ensure that your homes are safe and comfortable and that we deliver great services to our customers.

Here is an example of where staff from different teams come together to work.

As part of Albyn's ongoing maintenance programme, 38 homes in Nairn are having bathrooms replaced in 2021. Replacement bathrooms usually means installing modern versions of the same facilities.

In reviewing the planned works for Albyn Court in Nairn, the Assets and Customers Services teams realised that simply replacing like-for-like in 24 of the bathrooms would not be ideal: the bathrooms dating from 1988 are small and do not

make best use of the space available.

George Mackie from the Assets Team and Elaine Wilkinson from Customer Services have led a team working with some of our customers and our building contractors, to create a prototype replacement bathroom in one of the homes.

They were able to explore what additional space was behind walls, and use different bathroom fittings, to create a better bathroom design that offers more comfortable tenant experience.

The team met regularly to solve the problems the bathrooms created, exploring and assessing options to create a value-for-money upgrade programme.



**The results?** The remodelled bathrooms are:

- Brighter
- Offer more space
- Are better ventilated
- Have a more easily accessible shower

Work will take at least two days in each home, considering customer needs with contractor plans. This will include provision of welfare facilities adjacent to

the buildings whilst works are ongoing. Fitting of the bathrooms will get underway soon.

We will be working like this on far more of our upcoming maintenance programmes. Sharing our technical skills and knowledge of customer experiences in their homes, means we can work together to make things better. This same working style now takes place more than before in our new build programme too, so we can design and plan projects that better meet customer needs.

# Your Services, Your Say

We are making our customers more aware of our complaints, and how we use them to learn lessons for our future service delivery.

We welcome complaints, comments and compliments in order to ensure you receive a best-in-class service.



Category	Stage	Complaint	Lessons Learned
Repairs	1	Contractor did not attend the property within the agreed time scales.	Contractor to leave attendance note if they attend and tenant is not available.
Factoring	1	Assisted garden maintenance not being undertaken as expected.	Factoring and assisted garden contractor to issue specification at the beginning of the new cutting season.
Factoring	2	Gull management not being undertaken in line with the requirements of NatureScot.	A new bird management policy has been established, bird control will be proactive, instead of reactive.

## Have Your Say

### Do you wish to make a complaint or provide a compliment?

Get in touch in a way that is convenient for you:

- Talk to your Housing Officer
- Call us on 0300 323 0990 (North) or 0300 323 0991 (South)
- Email us at [housing.south@albynhousing.org.uk](mailto:housing.south@albynhousing.org.uk) (South) or [housing.north@albynhousing.org.uk](mailto:housing.north@albynhousing.org.uk) (North)
- Report your complaint via our website, [www.albynhousing.org.uk](http://www.albynhousing.org.uk)
- Visit our offices (when they are reopened) and speak to a member of staff

### Thank You, Tenant Editorial Group!

This summer, the Tenant Editorial Group met with Albyn's Social Media & Communications Officer and Communities Assistant to provide feedback on our summer issue of Newsview.

From readability to making the content more personal by introducing staff members, and even how we address the post, we had a thorough discussion about making this newsletter the most helpful it can be for all our

tenants, and a few laughs along the way.

A heartfelt thank you to all involved! We are slowly incorporating changes, with more to come in the next issue. If you would like to provide feedback on this newsletter, please email:

[corporate@albynhousing.org.uk](mailto:corporate@albynhousing.org.uk).

# Compliments & Comments

As you will have seen from the previous page, we intend to share much more information with you on our complaints and how we use them to improve services. We also wanted you to see some of the comments and compliments we receive, too.

We welcome all feedback! In this issue, we wanted to feature comments about our contractors.

## Joiner Feedback

"It was very good that the joiner turned up quickly. My wife has a lot of serious health problems, and it relieved a lot of her chronic anxiety when the joiner arrived."

## Plumber Feedback

"The service was excellent, both from yourselves and the plumber. It was very much appreciated."

## Electrical Contractor Feedback

"I was very satisfied by the electrical work was carried out."

## Contractor Feedback

"Very satisfied. Thank you for being so quick to help. The job was carried out by a proper tradesman, very polite from start to finish. Thank you all who helped."

## Contractor Feedback

"The man was very quick, professional, tidy, and very polite – a pleasure to deal with."

## Locksmith Feedback

"A very helpful and professional locksmith."

## Albyn Housing Feedback

"Albyn Housing staff very seldom get the thanks and respect you deserve. I've been a tenant a long time and I have never found less than excellent service... Thank you for all you do for your people."

## Electrician Feedback

"He came and took care of it right away. Such great service."

## Contractor Feedback

"I phoned at 4 PM one day and the next day everything was fixed."

Thank you so much."

## Contractor Feedback

"Very satisfied. Friendly, tidy workers. Always satisfied with service."



# Connecting Communities Fund



By: Lucy Fraser, Head of Innovation

Connecting Scotland is a Scottish Government initiative set up in response to the coronavirus pandemic to provide support to people who are digitally excluded and on low incomes.

The programme is targeted at organisations like Albyn who are already working with people who are hard to reach digitally, and provided both computers and support to enable people

to access and learn to use technology.

We were able to identify 17 people who could use the support immediately and they were offered:

- Access to devices – iPads and/or Chromebooks.
- Access to connectivity – a mobile Wi-Fi device (MiFi) with unlimited data for 24 months.
- Access to training and support – to allow staff and volunteers to support service users to use the internet confidently and safely.

There were a limited number of places offered to each organization and we were very pleased to be able to respond quickly and get the full number of places available for our tenants.

We are very aware that there are more of you who may have been able to benefit from this type of initiative and we are working on a tenants' digital inclusion policy so we can identify and target people who need support more effectively in the future.

## Additional Help



**Changeworks'** Affordable Warmth Services help tenants having difficulties with high electricity or heating bills, billing issues, supplier problems, and accessing emergency funds. Call their friendly expert advisors for free on 0800 870 8800, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, or email [warmth@changeworks.org.uk](mailto:warmth@changeworks.org.uk).



Visit Our Webpage  
for Gambling  
Support Options.

Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) has been funded by GambleAware to rollout the **Gambling Support Service** (GSS) across Scotland from April 2020 to March 2022. Our staff have been trained to recognise when people are at risk of or experience gambling harms. If gambling is having an impact on your life, there is lots of support available. Contact your Housing Officer or look on our website for support.



**Citizens Advice Scotland** and its member CABs make up Scotland's largest free, independent, confidential, and impartial advice network. In 2020-21, the Citizens Advice network helped over 171,000 clients in Scotland and dealt with over 647,000 advice issues.

They can help on a wide range of issues from benefits and debt advice to scams and winter fuel bills. If you have a problem, get in touch with your local CAB.

Find your local CAB by using our postcode search online, visiting our self-help pages on our website, or calling our helpline on 0800 028 1456.



# Digital Update

By: Graeme Hamilton, Project Manager

Significant progress has been made with the development of Albyn's new housing management system. This system is being developed to enable Albyn's teams to be more efficient in managing your home and dealing with your enquiries – making more time available to provide support where it's needed most. The system will also introduce new online services for customers – enabling you to manage your tenancy when and where you want.

We plan to implement these changes in two phases. Phase 1 will introduce the new system internally first, in order to ensure the core system is working correctly before we switch on customer online access during Phase 2.

We hoped to 'go live' with Phase 1 towards the end of 2021 but have decided to delay this until 2022 to ensure the system

is fully tested and Albyn's teams are as well prepared as possible for the changes. Inevitably this means that the introduction of online services for tenants (Phase 2) is delayed too.

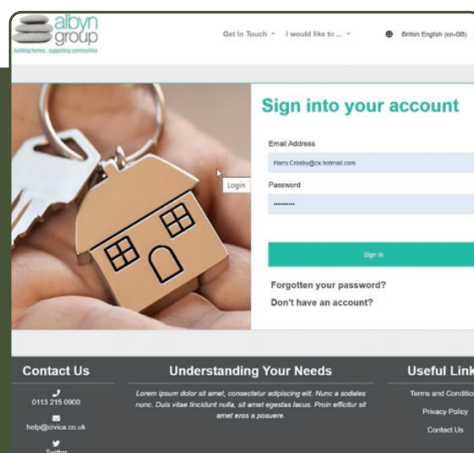
We have consulted with tenant representatives who helpfully suggested different ways we can communicate important information to tenants about the changes at the right time. Crucially, we want to support tenants as well as possible to take advantage of the online services when they become available. Also, it's important that we inform you about the short-term impact on services that are likely to occur while teams get used to new ways of working.

For now, please watch this space and look out for communications coming your way in 2022 to keep you up to speed!

## Fancy Being a Digital Tester?

We would like people of all digital abilities to take part in testing the accessibility and user-friendliness of new online services as they develop.

If you'd be interested in taking part, please contact the Project Phoenix team on 01349 852978 or at [projectphoenix@albynhousing.org.uk](mailto:projectphoenix@albynhousing.org.uk).



## Be Vigilant Against Fly-Tipping in Your Area

By: Laura Bradley, Highland Residential Manager

Highland Residential is the Factor for over 199 sites, and we factor the majority of Albyn's sites and are an Albyn Group subsidiary. Our Factoring team has seen a sharp increase in the amount of requests for additional works outside of a Factor's responsibilities and thought it would be a good time to share some quick tips this autumn.

### Litter, Rubbish & Recycling

No one likes to see the beauty of autumn taken away by litter everywhere, or the toll it takes on our environment. Remember to reduce, reuse, and recycle in the appropriate manner. By teaching children as they grow, we can reduce negative environmental impact for future generations.



Did you know there is an £80 fine for dropping litter? Scan the QR code below or visit [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk) to report litter to The Highland Council. There has been a significant increase in the requests for us to arrange rubbish removal that is not occupier's waste.

As a reminder, Highland Residential does not oversee rubbish removal for individual tenants. If you need to dispose of large household items, please visit The Highland Council's website.

### Reporting Fly-tipping

Fly-tipping has serious consequences, from fines of £200 to £20,000 and prison time. If you see a fly tipper, please report it. Otherwise, you may be liable to paying for removal if it is on your property.



Report Litter or Fly Tipping Here.

For Emergency Repairs Out of Hours, Call **01349 852978** (North) or **01463 712516** (South) for Our Out of Hours Service

# Do You Need Home Contents Insurance?



By: Jim Banks & Alli Vass, Customer Service Managers

When life gets busy and things are going well, it can be easy to forget about home contents insurance. Like most forms of insurance, it is something we hope we will never need, but the value becomes clear if we ever have to use it. You should be aware that whilst we insure the building, it is your responsibility to obtain cover for your own household belongings as we are not able to replace these for you if they are lost in a major incident.

**Contents insurance can cover replacing personal belongings in your home (and typically outbuildings) if they are damaged, destroyed, or even stolen.**

Examples of items covered include: washing machines, fridges, phones, tablets, laptops, televisions, and jewellery.

This type of insurance usually also covers fire and water damage, falling trees, storms, lightning, and explosions.

Resources such as [www.comparethemarket.com](http://www.comparethemarket.com) have tools that show the best plans for individual needs, by comparing quotes from different companies. You may be able to get a discount for paying annually.

There is also the Diamond Insurance Scheme, a specialist Tenants Contents Insurance Policy. For more details, speak to your Housing Officer.

The risks of not having insurance are high – if catastrophe strikes, there may be no way of replacing appliances, tech, or a number of other household goods without paying a premium.

We hope you sign up soon!

Find More Information at  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)



# Have You Applied for Alterations Permissions?

By: Morag Beers, Interim Director of Assets & Subsidiaries

If you wish to make alterations or improvements to your home during your tenancy, our written consent is required before any works are undertaken. Your tenancy allows for alterations – new fixtures and fittings, garden sheds, garages etc. – so long as our consent is in place.

Please be assured we will not refuse permission unreasonably. We may grant permission with conditions (for example, the standard of the work we require). We have to ensure that all requests comply with all relevant safety legislation.

At the end of your tenancy, you may be entitled to compensation for alterations/improvements that you have made. The rules on calculating this compensation payment are set by the Housing Scotland Act.

We may require, prior to your tenancy's end, for any alterations/improvements which have been undertaken without permission to be removed and the property reinstated to its original condition. Where this does not occur, we may seek to recharge any reinstatement works back to you.

Consent from us does not remove the need for all Planning and Building Warrant approvals to be in place. You are fully responsible for obtaining these and we will require to see copies of the permissions before our consent can be issued.

If you are planning any alteration/improvement to your home, please contact our Customer Service team to discuss your plans and get further detail on the process of obtaining permission.

# How We Deal with Anti-Social Behaviour



By: Maureen Knight, Interim Director of Customer Services

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is something that we take very seriously at Albyn. ASB is not acceptable and, if proven, we can take serious action against the perpetrators. The law is very clear on what is defined as ASB.

Someone is behaving in an anti-social manner if:

"They are acting in a manner that is causing, or is likely to cause alarm or distress," or

"They are doing several things over a period of time, that cause or are likely to cause alarm, or distress to at least one person living in another household."

(Source – Shelter Scotland)

Albyn places its ASB into two main categories:

## **Category 1 – Serious**

**These are cases that are of a serious nature and may include criminal activity such as drugs/drug dealing, violence and threatening behaviour, illegal use of property and disturbances that cause property damage.**

## **Category 2 – Routine**

**These are cases that are persistent in nature such as noise, verbal abuse, failure to control the behaviour of children, and minor neighbour nuisance.**

## **What if I have an ASB complaint?**

You can speak with a Housing Officer or Assistant in strict confidence, and you can contact us via the website. When you do speak with us, we may offer initial advice such as asking you to speak directly with the person in question where it is possible to do so; this can sometimes prevent the action escalating without the need for intervention. However,

if we do need to intervene, and so that we can take the appropriate action, we will seek from you as much as detail as possible about the incident you are reporting to us. We therefore advise that you take down dates of incidents and people who may have witnessed the incident. Having this information is helpful to support the reports you make.

## **What happens next?**

We will acknowledge your complaint and advise you which of the categories it is to be investigated as. We will speak to the person(s) who are causing the problem and take appropriate action. We will advise you of how we have dealt with your complaint and advise of any action taken. This may include mediation or in some cases issuing anti-social behaviour contracts. All information we receive on ASB complaints is treated in the strictest confidence.

## **What can Albyn do?**

If ASB is confirmed, we will issue a first warning. Hopefully this is enough of a deterrent and will rectify the complaint. If not and further complaint(s) are received, a second warning will be issued. It is our intended purpose to work closely with those responsible for ASB and this may result in us seeking outside agency support from Mediation Services, Social Work, and Tenancy Support Teams. However, if all methods of support and assistance have not resolved the ASB, we will seek an order to recover possession of a property.

All our tenants have a Tenancy Agreement with Albyn Housing Society. In this we have set out acceptable behaviours that we expect from all tenants such as respecting neighbours, not using your property for illegal activity and being responsible for the behaviours of visitors or occupants residing in your property. It also confirms that we will take action on confirmed reports of ASB and that your tenancy is at risk if you commit ASB.

Albyn wants all our customers to live in a happy and safe environment where they can enjoy their homes, and therefore tackling ASB is one way in which we can achieve this.

Serious cases of ASB are not frequent but it is important that you understand what steps and measure we can take. It is worthwhile to note that people are spending more time within their homes during the pandemic, with children being in and out of school and an increase in associated household stresses have caused tempers to fray a bit more than would normally be the case. We would therefore urge any tenant to take account of this, however, if you are concerned regarding ASB, you can contact us to discuss.

## **Useful Contact Information:**

Police Scotland: 101 Victim Support: 0800 160 1985

For Emergency Repairs Out of Hours, Call **01349 852978** (North) or **01463 712516** (South) for Our Out of Hours Service



# Improving Your Homes

By: Morag Beers, Interim Director of Assets & Subsidiaries

Albyn has an annual programme of capital investment works to maintain our homes and to improve their facilities. This is in addition to the day-to-day repairs services provided when you report a repair requirement to us.

These investment works are required to ensure that our homes are safe and comfortable for our customers. Works are carried out in line with standards set by the government for landlords. Every Registered Social Landlord in Scotland must report on how well they meet the standards in their Annual Return on Charter.

The primary standard to meet is called the **Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)**: it measures the quality of over 50 elements in each home.

There is a second key standard that RSLs must meet: it is called the **EESHS – Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing**. The EESHS standard aims to ensure homes are energy efficient, fuel poverty can be reduced, and that carbon emissions from home heating are reduced.

The government recently introduced an update to EESHS, called EESHS2, which requires landlords to improve energy efficiency further, aiming to have all homes attain an EPC B rating by 2032. It was part of a wide range of ideas for housing which the government presented in its recent report: Housing to 2040.



Over the next few years, a key aim of Albyn's investment programme will be in meeting the EESHS2 standards in each home, reducing fuel poverty further and contributing to Scotland's target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2045.

Another important element of our investment programme in our homes is the upgrades to kitchens, bathrooms, heating, windows, and doors. This runs on an annual basis to ensure that these facilities are modern and in good condition.

This year's planned maintenance programme is shown below, with a total budget of **£1,835,000 spread across 192 homes - an average £9,557 investment per home.**



- **Locations:** Inverness, Forres, Nairn, Invergordon
- **Budget:** £385,000
- **Number of Homes:** 38
- **Investment per Home:** £10,100
- **Start Date:** 23 August 2021
- **Components:** Cairngorm



- **Locations:** Tain
- **Budget:** £867,000
- **Number of Homes:** 74
- **Investment per Home:** £12,300
- **Start Date:** August 16th 2021
- **Components:** Dimplex Quantum



- **Locations:** Inverness, Kinlochbervie
- **Budget:** £310,000
- **Number of Homes:** 40
- **Investment per Home:** £7,750
- **Start Date:** 6 September 2021
- **Components:** JTC Kitchens



- **Locations:** Nairn
- **Budget:** £273,000
- **Number of Homes:** 40
- **Investment per Home:** £6,825
- **Start Date:** September 2021
- **Components:** Armitage Shanks, Mira Showers

# Managing & Preventing Condensation



By: Morag Beers, Interim Director of Assets & Subsidiaries

As we move into winter, we are more likely to experience condensation in our homes. Condensation that is not controlled can lead to mould and damp. Mould and damp can create health issues such as sinus problems, skin rashes, and bronchial issues.

## What Causes Condensation

There are two causes of condensation:

- Too much moisture in the air
- Warm moist air meeting a cold surface

Condensation occurs more often in winter because we have our heating turned on and our windows are more likely to be closed. This warms and traps moisture from everyday activities in our homes – cooking, showering, drying clothes. When the warm, moist air reaches a cold surface, like a windowpane, a wall or a shower door, the air cools quickly and the water forms on the cold surface. This is condensation.

It is important that we manage condensation when it occurs in our homes.



## Simple Steps to Remove Condensation

- Wipe down damp windows, walls, and shower screens every day to remove the moisture
- Use either a cloth, a window squeegee cleaner, or a window wiper together with a cloth

## Preventing Condensation from Returning

There are two things we need to do to reduce the chance that condensation will occur:

- Reduce the moisture in our homes
- Increase the fresh air inside, even in winter

### Some things we can do in our homes to help prevent condensation:

- 1 Ensure your washing machines & tumble driers are correctly ventilated.
- 2 When you can, dry your washing outside.
- 3 If drying inside, hang your washing in the bathroom with the door closed, window open or ventilation fans switched on.
- 4 Put the lids on your pots & pans when cooking.
- 5 When cooking, use your extractor fan, open a window, and keep the kitchen door closed if possible.
- 6 Close the bathroom door & open the window when showering or bathing.
- 7 Use any extractor fans that are fitted in your kitchens & bathrooms when showering, bathing, or cooking.
- 8 If your windows are fitted with small trickle vents, make sure these are open. You can find these at the top of your window frames.
- 9 Open your windows to let some fresh air into your home every day.
- 10 If you can, try to keep your home at a constant warm temperature.

For Emergency Repairs Out of Hours, Call **01349 852978** (North) or **01463 712516** (South) for Our Out of Hours Service

# New Development Updates



By: Morag Beers, Interim Director of Assets & Subsidiaries

## Welcome To Your New Homes!

Albyn are having a busy autumn welcoming tenants to new accommodations! At the beginning of October, our new development at Bailey Place, Torbreck was handed over.

With social distancing measures in place and many masks over big smiles, it was a different type of handover than we have had before. That did not dampen the excited atmosphere and our customer service staff were pleased to welcome 37 families and individuals.

We hope each of you enjoy your new homes!

## Early Feedback

We received the following lovely bit of feedback from one of our new tenants:

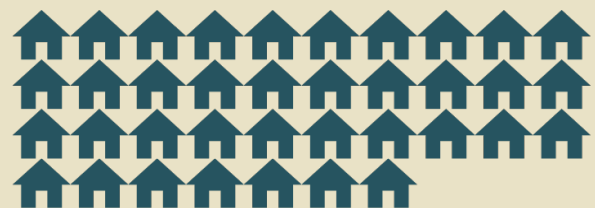
*"I just wanted to say thank you again for arranging the visit this morning. [...] does not show much emotion but he said later that he was 'all excitable and emotional' and in a good way. He is already arranging his furniture! I think a lot of the anxiety is lifting. Thank you very much."*

We are always looking for your feedback. If you have thoughts you want to share, please get in touch.

## Development Details

The development provides several accommodation styles, from flats through to detached properties, some of which you can see in the photos on these pages. There are a range of property sizes, from 1-bed/2-person flats up to a 3-bed/5-person detached house.

Bailey Place, Torbreck consists of 46 homes. 37 have been provided for social rent, with a further 9 Mid-Market Rent properties.



37 Homes for Social Rent



9 Homes for Mid-Market Rent

## Our New Build Programme

Albyn's New Build Programme continues to deliver high-quality affordable homes for existing and new customers. Each of these projects takes several years to plan, design, and build, which is a true cause for celebration upon completion.

Key to our continued success is the collaboration between colleagues, from the Development Team leading the design/build process, to Finance ensuring the funds are available to support the build process, and Customer Services working to allocate the homes. Assets also considers the future maintenance/service requirements, and Highland Residential ensures that factoring/management services are in place for common areas.

Each new development needs this strong team, working together for tenants, to make sure our homes are ready for their new occupants.





This chart shows upcoming project handovers. Completions dates are when properties are handed over to us. Once that happens, our teams get to work before handing over the keys to tenants. You can see there are many projects in progress!

Location	Project Name	Total Units	Social Rent	Mid-Market Rent	LIFT	Estimated Completion Date
Alness	Dalmore Phase 5	45	37	8	0	27 October & 15 November 2021
Ardersier	Ardersier (Springfield)	29	23	4	2	4 October 2021
Beaulay	Fire Station Site (Springfield)	12	10	2	0	March 2022
Dingwall	Castlepark Phase 1	26	19	0	7	28 February 2022
Dingwall	Castlepark Phase 1 (FIT Homes)	11	11	0	0	28 February 2022
Inverness	Ness Castle - Torbreck	46	37	9	0	30 September 2021
Inverness	Ness Side Area B4	54	32	12	10	26 November & 10 December 2021
Inverness	Lomond Gardens Phase 2	8	0	8	0	January 2022
Dornoch	Elizabeth Crescent Phase 1	4	0	4	0	Spring 2022
Inverness	Stratton Farm (FIT)	8	8	0	0	March 2022



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# How to Become a Society Member

Did you know that for **around the cost of a sausage roll at a bakery**, you could become a Society member?



## A Few of the Perks

- Hold one share within the Society
- Become eligible for Board membership consideration
- Attend and vote at General Meetings
- Be added to our Register of Members
- Get a SHARE certificate confirming membership

## How to Apply

Complete and return an application form along with a £1

payment (by cheque or postal order) to the address on the form. Your application will be considered by the Board at their next meeting, and you will be informed of the outcome in writing.

Get the application form by either scanning the QR code to the right, calling us on 01349 801 007 for an application by post, or downloading a form at the link below.



Download an application form here.

[www.albynhousing.org.uk/  
how-to-become-a-society-member](http://www.albynhousing.org.uk/how-to-become-a-society-member)



## Important Updates



### Tenant Charter Report

The Tenant Charter Report will be sent to you by the end of October. The Charter is developed and designed by a group of volunteer Albyn tenants. It is something that the Scottish Housing Regulator requires from all social landlords and gives tenants the rights to look in depth at how we are performing as a landlord. This year, we are also including a review of our Charter so that next year's group of tenant volunteers know what it is you want to see and if any changes need to be made.

### Customer Satisfaction Survey for 2021

Look out for the Customer Satisfaction Survey. This is the first full survey we have sent out in 3 years. It is designed to let you have your say on the services and standards that we deliver for you, and your responses will help us identify areas you feel we need to do better, which will help us target our improvement efforts.

There is also a prize draw opportunity for those who reply: 5 tenants will be randomly selected to win a £50 shopping voucher.

### Outcomes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

We held our AGM on Wednesday, 29 September 2021. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the AGM was held with limited attendance this year, to avoid community

transmission of the virus. We asked Society members to nominate a proxy to represent them at the meeting instead of attending in person, and we restricted the agenda of the meeting to those items that needed to be discussed.

The AGM featured our Annual Report, which highlights Acting Chair of Board and Chief Executive Reports. We have also published the approved minutes from last year and Financial Statements for the year.

These documents are only available online, but if you would like a printed copy sent to you, please contact us.



Get full details about the AGM & read the Annual Report here:

[www.albynhousing.org.uk/agm-2021](http://www.albynhousing.org.uk/agm-2021)

### Annual Review of Rent Levels

In November, we will be consulting with all of our tenants on options for the annual review of rent levels. We will be guided by our tenants' responses to this important consultation so please look out for your chance to have your say, either through a text message or postal survey.