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RADIO TELESWITCH

The technology that supports Radio Teleswitch Service (RTS) electricity meters is now being switched off one area at a time. Without the technology to tell RTS meters when to swap between peak and off-peak rates, they may no longer work properly. It may mean that heating and hot water will stop functioning as normal in households and businesses that have an RTS meter fitted.

If you have an RTS meter, your electricity supplier should have got in touch with you to arrange an upgrade to a smart meter. The original deadline was June 2025 but this has now been extended into Spring 2026 to ensure that all households have the opportunity to have a smart meter installed before the switch-off.

You may have an RTS meter if:

- your home has a separate switch box near your meter with a Radio Teleswitch label on it
- your home is heated using electricity or storage heaters
- there is no gas supply to your area, including households in rural areas and high-rise flats
- you get cheaper energy at different times of day, for example, you might be on an Economy 7, Economy 10, or Total Heat Total Control tariff

Get in touch with your electricity supplier if you're still not sure which meter is in your home.

In some instances, your supplier may not be able to offer you a smart meter at the moment. If this is the case, they must make sure you have a suitable meter installed, and that your service is not disrupted.

You should contact your supplier to understand the options available to you.



0300 323 0990
office@albynhousing.org.uk

AUTUMN NEWSVIEW WELCOME!



Maureen Knight, Interim Group CEO



Welcome to our Autumn 2025 newsletter.

As we move into the colder months, this edition of NewsView reflects the real and pressing challenges many of our tenants and communities face, from rising energy costs and the transition away from Radio Teleswitch meters, to the need for cold weather precautions and extra support to help sustain tenancies.

We know that autumn can bring uncertainty, especially for households managing tight budgets or living in rural areas. That's why we've strengthened our support services, including our Tenant Energy Service, income maximisation advice, and practical guidance to help you stay safe and warm. We're also pleased to share updates on our Community Fund, which continues to support local projects that make a real difference.

At the same time, there are opportunities to get

more involved, whether through our upcoming rent consultation, the Tenant Charter Report, or by joining us on estate walkabouts and annual home visits. These specific items are designed to ensure your voice shapes how we work and how we improve, so please make sure you get involved in any way you can.

I'd also like to thank everyone who attended our recent AGM and welcome all our new Board Members; I know that all of the Albyn team are looking forward to hearing their new ideas and sharing their experiences with us to better the services we offer tenants. Their collective experience will help us continue to invest in homes that meet tenants' needs now and for the future.

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter and please do let us know if you would like to hear more about any of the articles.

Maureen



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What is the Community Fund?

Albyn Housing has a Community Fund that provides small grants to local community groups. Grants of up to £500 are available for specific community projects that benefit the local community.

Projects should fit with Albyn's charitable objectives:

"the relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage"

Area: Communities in the Highlands & Moray, where Albyn has housing stock- you can contact us to check your area

Suitable for: Voluntary or community organisations

Funding size: Up to £500 per annum

Application deadline: Ongoing (Fund will close annually once budget is allocated)

How do I apply?

If you want to make an application for your community project, fill out the application form and submit it to communityfund@albynhousing.org.uk. You can also contact us on 0300 323 0990.

Who can apply?

You can apply if your organisation is a:

- voluntary or community organisation
- registered charity
- constituted group or club
- not-for-profit company or Community Interest Company
- school (so long as your project benefits and involves the communities around the school)



Helmsdale & District Development Trust used a grant from the Community Fund to support their Multi Use Games Area.

Who cannot apply?

Who we cannot accept applications from:

- individuals
- sole traders
- companies that can pay profits to directors, shareholders or members
- organisations based outside Albyn's catchment area
- organisations awaiting a decision on a previous application
- one organisation applying on behalf of another



Applecross Community Hall after renovations funded by Albyn Community Fund

Storage of items in communal hall being a fire hazard

A reminder to all tenants that no items are allowed to be stored in internal communal areas. These items can cause an obstruction should there be a fire and tenants need to evacuate the building quickly. If we find items stored in the communal area, you will be contacted to ask to remove these.

Noise app

Following a successful trial, the Tenancy Operations team has introduced an exciting new tool to assist in dealing with anti-social behaviour/noise nuisance complaints.

We can now invite tenants to download 'The Noise App' allowing you to record any noise nuisance you may be experiencing in your property. Reporters can create a detailed report, attaching their evidence, including high-quality audio, video and imagery, in under two minutes. Housing Officer's can access these recordings on a secure database to triage and manage noise issues.

Several tenants have now used the noise app and provided positive feedback on their experience. If you wish to find out more information, please contact the Tenancy Operations team on 0300 323 0990

Option 3

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Albyn held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Wednesday 24 September at Eden Court.

This was a wonderful opportunity for the Board, staff, Society shareholders, and other stakeholders to come together and share the achievements and challenges of Albyn over the past year. You can read more about this in our Annual Report 2024/25 which can be found on our website at www.albynhousing.org.uk/annual-report-2024-2025.

We were delighted to appoint four new Board Members at the AGM: Ewan McGarrie, Olivia Lindsay, Terri Semple, and Annice Newlands. All bring a range of skills and experience that will support the Albyn Board to provide effective strategic oversight of the organisation.

Special thanks were also given to longstanding Board Members Ian Fosbrooke, Fiona Mustarde, and Craig Russell who all stepped down from the Board at the AGM.

Lesley McInnes, Chair
Clea Warner, Vice Chair
Carl Patching
Lynne Holborn
Jackie Bugden
Scott MacLeod

Niall Owen
Craig Levy
Ewan McGarrie
Terri Semple
Annice Newlands



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. **If you want to learn more about getting involved email businessServices@albynhousing.org.uk**

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. We will use your recorded communications preference which will be either through email, text or postal survey. Please let us know if you want to update these preferences.

Become a member of the Society

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 calling us on 01349 800 348 or downloading a form from our website.

DEALING WITH FLEAS

Fleas are a problem all year round but especially during the warmer months. It is much easier to prevent an infestation than treat one, so following preventative measures is advised

Flea facts

Fleas are an external parasite. There are different species of fleas such as dog fleas, cat fleas, rabbit fleas and human fleas and it is possible for many species to infest more than one host species

- Fleas only suck blood from their hosts as adults and some fleas can leap more than a hundred times their own body length
- A flea can live from between 14 days to a year, and a female can lay up to 50 eggs in one day
- It's estimated that 95 per cent of flea eggs, larvae and pupae live in the environment, not on your pet

Signs your pet might have fleas

There are a few things you can look out for that could mean your pet has fleas:

- Is your pet scratching and experiencing areas of hair loss, bald or sore patches, redness and irritation
- Thickened skin in areas (e.g. around ear edges)
- Can you see tiny dark specks in its fur, or small brown-black insects scurrying about
- Do you have any unaccounted for insect bites yourself

If you've answered 'yes' to any of these questions, it could mean fleas.

Comb your pet to check for fleas

A good way to check if your pet has fleas is to groom them using a fine-toothed comb held over something white, like a piece of kitchen paper. Any fleas or flea droppings will be deposited on the surface. Add a few drops of water, and if the droppings turn reddish brown it's very likely your pet has fleas.

It's essential to treat both your pet and your home, as fleas can survive in the environment without a host; flea treatment can easily be done at home, so here's how to do it:

- Flea treatments: prevent and get rid of fleas by regularly using flea treatment for your pets. See your vet for advice on the best flea products that will work for your pet and how often they should be used
- Treat quickly: If you spot fleas on your pet, treat them quickly, as they can give your cat or dog tapeworms and diseases so make sure you worm your pet as well
- Clean bedding regularly and vacuum furniture, floors and skirting boards to help destroy fleas at each stage of their lifecycle and throw away the dust bag after each use to prevent flea eggs and larvae from developing
- Treat regularly: you may need to treat your pet and home for fleas all year round if your home is centrally heated.

Only give your pet flea treatment that's been recommended for them, ideally one prescribed by your vet. Products suitable for one species may not be suitable for another.

Make sure to dispose of the packaging properly in household waste, and use the product only on the species listed

Flea bites and what they do

Flea bites can make your pet uncomfortable and itchy, but they can also bring a host of other problems:

- Allergic reactions: pets can be hypersensitive to flea saliva and suffer an allergic reaction
- Blood loss: fleas feed on blood, so young or frail animals can become weak and even die from blood loss
- Tapeworm: flea larvae can become infected with tapeworm eggs. If your pet eats an infected flea it can become host to this parasite. If your pet has fleas you should also make sure your pet is treated for worms
- Disease: fleas can also pass diseases to your pets



TENANCY SUSTAINMENT



Income Maximisation

Are you over State Pension age?

If you are over State Pension age, you may be eligible to claim Pension Credit even if you have savings. Pension Credit tops up your pension income and can help with day-to-day living costs.

Those who receive Pension Credit may also be able to get:

- help with rent and Council Tax
- help with energy bills
- access to local grants
- additional winter payments
- a free TV licence if you are 75 or older

You may be eligible if:

- you are single and your weekly income is less than £227.10 or
- your joint weekly income is less than £346.60 if you have a partner

If your income is higher, you may still be eligible for Pension Credit if you have a disability, you care for someone, you have savings or you have housing costs.

Find out more information at www.gov.uk/pension-credit or get in touch with our Tenancy Sustainment Team by calling and selecting the Tenancy Sustainment option or emailing tenancysustainment@albynhousing.org.uk.

Tenant Energy Service

Our Tenant Energy Service is free to access and gives our tenants expert energy advice through the online library. There is also support available from energy advisors who can provide expert help, communicate with energy suppliers on tenants' behalf, and direct to financial support if needed.

The Tenant Energy Support online advice library can be accessed via this link: www.changeworks.org.uk/tes/tes-tenant/tes-albyn-energy-advice/ or you can call Changeworks for one-to-one support from an energy advisor.

You can contact Changeworks on freephone 0800 870 8800 between 9am-5pm, Monday - Friday if you feel you need some additional support or a more detailed chat.



Warm Home Discount Applications open now with some suppliers

Did you know you might be eligible for £150 off your electricity? In the autumn many energy suppliers offer this through their 'Warm Home Discount'. This is a one-off payment of £150 towards your electricity bill. If you're on a pre-payment meter you'll get £150 electricity credit.

If you receive the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit, you should get the Warm Home Discount automatically. If you are on a low income or receive certain benefits, you'll need to apply for the discount. Different energy suppliers have different rules about who can get the Warm Home Discount. You can check your energy supplier's website or contact them directly and to see if you might qualify, or to find out about other financial support available.

Adaptations Update

In our summer newsletter we provided an update on the delay in carrying out adaptations work due to the delay in funding. We are pleased to let you know funding has been approved and we are working our way through the waiting list to carrying out these requests. If you require any adjustments to your home to enable you to carry out day to day activities, please contact us selecting the option for Tenancy Sustainment.

YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY

We're keen to meet as many tenants as possible and get to know the communities you live in. To help us do this, we'll soon be introducing two new ways to connect with you: annual home inspections and estate walkabouts.

Annual Visits

Annual inspections give us the chance to visit you in your home. During these visits, we'll:

- Check that fixtures and fittings are in good condition
- Make sure our records about your household are up to date
- Talk with you about any support you may need to help manage your tenancy

Estate walkabouts

These are an opportunity for you to join our staff and highlight any issues in your neighbourhood that we may be able to improve together.

We'll contact you in advance to let you know when inspections or walkabouts are planned in your area. We'd love you to take part and share your thoughts, it's a great way for us to work together to make your home and community the best they can be.



COLD WEATHER PRECAUTIONS

Keep warm

In order to avoid burst pipes try to keep your house warm day and night. If you choose to only have the heating on downstairs, leave room doors open to allow heat to circulate. Burst pipes can be avoided by keeping your radiators at the frost setting, so please consider this if you will be away during cold spells. Check on attic spaces, especially if water and storage tanks are there. Make sure insulation which should cover pipes and tanks has not been accidentally moved.

You should never ignore a minor water leak. A small leak may be okay overnight, but if left for several days, it could cause major damage within your home. If a leak happens, these are the steps you should take:

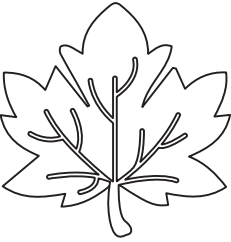
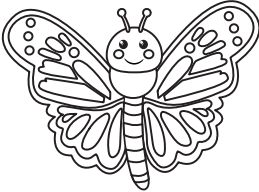
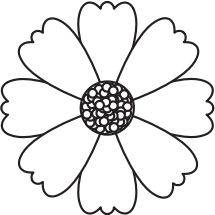
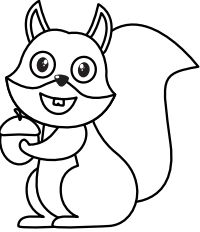
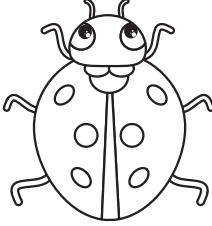
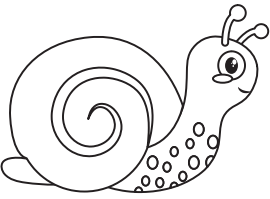
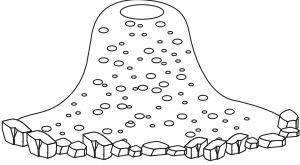
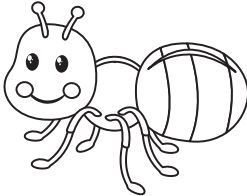
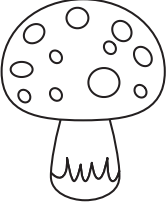
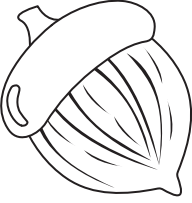
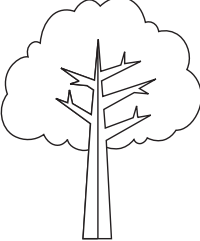
1. Turn off the water supply. The stop valve is usually under the sink.
2. Switch off the electricity at the mains.
3. Call Albyn to report the emergency.
4. Switch off central heating systems. If you have a solid fuel fire, close down the damper and let the fire die out. Do not attempt to drain down the boiler unless the fire has gone out.
5. Use a bucket to catch any water leaking from the burst.
6. Open all taps to sinks and bath (if possible, collect water in the bath for flushing the WC and washing).

If you go away in the winter, please be advised that you should take care to drain your pipes or leave your radiators on the frost setting to prevent damage to your property. If you go away for more than 2 weeks' time, you should let the Society know know you will be away and where a key can be obtained in case of emergencies.

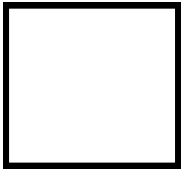
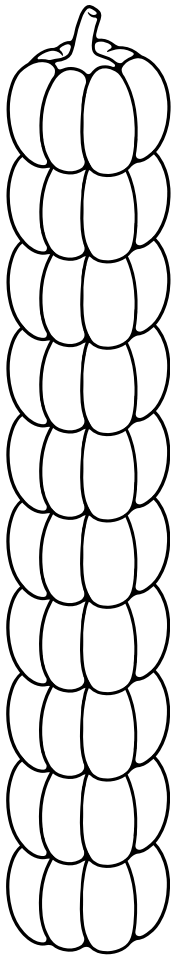


The society is not responsible for any damage caused to your personal belongings by frost damage or burst pipe or tank.

KIDS PAGE

 Leaf	 Log	 Butterfly
 Flower	 Squirrel	 Bug
 Snail	 Ant Mound	 Ant
 Mushroom	 Acorn	 Tree

COUNT THE
PUMPKINS



AUTUMN BINGO

How many of these items can you find this autumn?



Invergordon Office | 98 - 104 High Street | Invergordon, Ross-shire | IV18 0DL
Inverness Office | 68 MacLennan Crescent | Inverness | IV3 8DN
Call us on 0300 323 0990.
More information can be found on our website: www.albynhousing.org.uk

Join the conversation

