



# Public Holidays - Office Closure Dates

The office will be closed  
on the following dates:

- **Thursday 2nd June 2022**
- **Friday 3rd June 2022**
- **Friday 15th July 2022**
- **Monday 18th July 2022**

If you have an emergency Gas Repair during this time please call City Building on **0800 595 595** and for emergency repairs please call McGill (formerly McDougall Group) on **0800 975 1234**.

To make a payment, you can download our Customer Portal app from the Apple App Store or Google play or sign in via our website [www.knowes.org](http://www.knowes.org)



# Change of Name for our Contractor

In August 2021, our contractor, The McDougall Group were taken over by a company called McGill. The repairs and maintenance contract The McDougall Group had with Knowes HA was transferred over to the new company.

There has not been any changes as yet and the contact details for reporting emergencies remains the same. However, in the coming months, McGill are planning on changing the uniforms and the name on their vans to the new company.

# Community Working Group

Our Community Working Group is up and running but we are always looking for more members.

The Group is independent from our Management Committee and is customer-focused and energetically challenges policies and practices.

The Community Working Group plays a critical role in ensuring that services are delivered to the highest standards. The Group is tenant-led and self-regulated and will carry out its scrutiny role by having access to staff of the Association to request information and challenge performance where appropriate.

The group will be meeting on a quarterly basis on a Thursday in the Association office and will discuss a number of topics including Resident Satisfaction

**YOUR  
OPINION  
MATTERS**

Surveys, policy reviews and quarterly performance information.

If you are interested in joining the Community Working Group, please contact our Corporate Services Compliance Officer Sandra McPhee on **01389 877752** (option 5) or by email at **smcphée@knowes.org**.

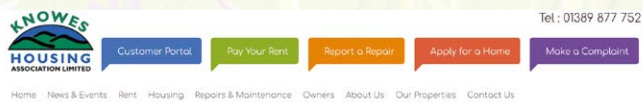
# Customer Portal

In 2021 the Association launch their Customer Portal app which allows both tenants and owners to access account details and being able to update any personal details on your account, make payments, report repairs and more.

The app can be downloaded from

the Apple App Store  or Google Play 

The Customer Portal can also be reached by going onto our website and clicking on the bubble on the front page.



Once you are on the portal you will initially need to register. If you are a tenant, you will require your tenancy reference number, which can be obtained by contacting the office. For owner occupiers, your reference number can be found on any invoice issued by the Association.

The Customer Portal is a useful and user friendly tool for customers to have access to their accounts and other services at all times.

If you would like any help and support registering and using the portal, please call the office on **01389 877752 option 5**.

# Complaints Performance 2021-22

Complaints are an essential way for us to monitor our performance throughout the year and each complaint is valued and helps us work towards improving our own performance and that of our contractors.

The following data shows the number of complaints received, time scales and a break down of the types of complaints we received during 2021-22.

	Stage 1	Stage 2
Complaints received in the reporting year	38	7
Complaints carried forward from previous reporting year	0	0
All complaints received and carried forward	37	7
Number of complaints responded to in full by the landlord in the reporting year	37	7
Time taken in working days to provide a full response	147	89
	Stage 1	Stage 2
Percentage of all complaints responded to in full	97.37%	100%
Average time taken in working days for a full response	3.74	12.7

## Whitehill Crescent

As part of our Investment Strategy, the Management Committee of Knowes HA has approved a budget for improving the balconies at Whitehill Crescent.

An Architect will be appointed to commence the design and specification for the improvement works to progress to the tender stage and appoint a contractor for the work.

We expect work to commence in August/September 2022.

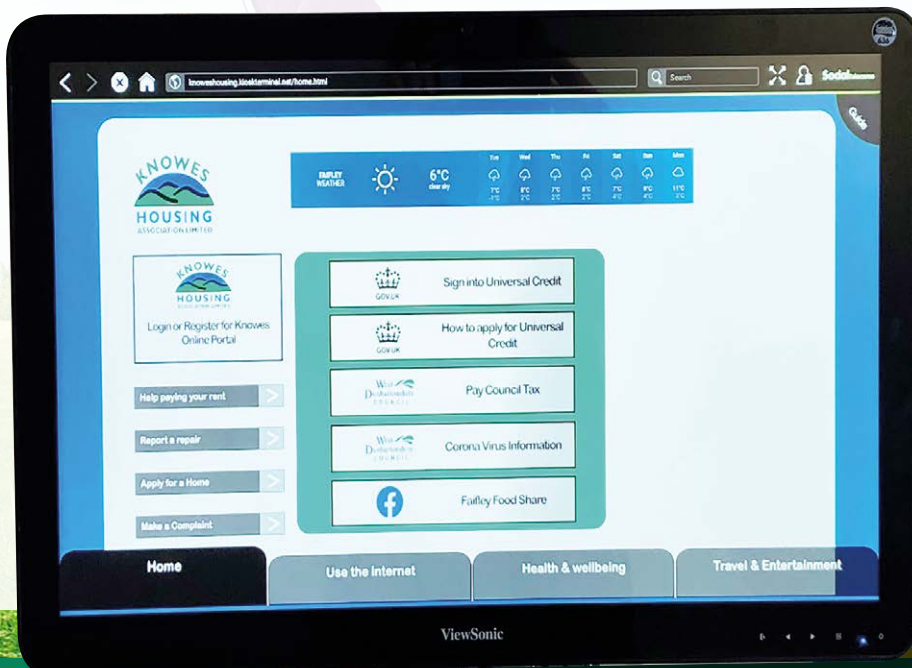
## Customer Kiosk

As well as the launch of the Customer Portal in 2021, the Association has now installed a Customer Kiosk in the office.

This allows customer, who maybe don't have access to the internet, to access various useful services including our Customer Portal, access to Universal Credit sites and paying your Council Tax.

The Kiosk is located in one of our our interview room, which gives the customer complete privacy to deal with their business.

Staff are on hand to give customers advice on using the device at all times.





# Dog Fouling

There has been an increase in dog fouling within the Faifley area especially on the open spaces.

Dog fouling can cause serious health issues especially if children come in contact with it when playing on the grassed areas.

If you know who is allowing their dog to foul and not picking it up a report can be made to West Dunbartonshire Council on their website or by calling **01389 772059**. Dog owners can be issued with a fine of £80 which will increase to £100 if not paid within 28 days.

Free dog poop bags can be collected from a number of locations including our office as well as libraries, Centre 81, Clydebank Police Office and Community Education centres.



## EICR - Electrical Inspections

**In 2021, the Valley Group were awarded the contract to carry out EICR inspections of the electrical installation in all properties. This requires to be carried out every 5 years, to ensure that the electrics are safe and up to current standards.**

This test forms part of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), therefore it is requirement to gain access to your home to carry this out. The test mainly involves working at your main circuit board or consumer unit, however, access will also be required to check certain sockets and switches to make sure that the wiring is in good condition. The test will not disrupt your home or make a mess, but it takes at least an hour to complete because we need to take a number of measurements and record test results. If we find any minor faults, the

electrician will repair these on the day that they are carrying out the test or if we need to address other issues, such as replacing your consumer unit, we will arrange this as follow-on work at a date and time to suit you.

We appreciate your co-operation in giving us access to your home so we can carry out this important check and ensure that you are safe and that your electrics are up to date.

Valley will contact you soon to make arrangements to carry out the EICR inspection. Covid risk assessments and working practises will be followed when carrying out the inspections.

Valley Group telephone number is **0141 404 0244** or **0141 442 0094**.

## Reminder - Office Cash Desk Closed

**In 2020 the Association took the decision to close the cash desk, meaning that payments can no longer be made in the office.**

To make payments towards your rent account, owner accounts or any other payments the following options are available to all customers.

- Online payments using the Customer Portal
- Setting up a Standing Order
- Phoning the Office and choosing option 3 for Finance to pay by credit or debit card





# Flourishing Faifley & The Secret Garden

Flourishing Faifley is a community group formed and based in Faifley consisting of residents and local organisation working with ourselves to build a better community in Faifley.

The group have been working in the Secret Garden to build an area for the local community to visit and learn more about garden skills, local wildlife and to engage with other members of the community.

Going forward there will be different events organised within the Garden including pumpkin growing, Halloween and Christmas events as well as providing the community with the opportunity to attend a variety of workshops. The garden will also be a meeting point for people to come along for a chat and to relax.

If you would like more information, please contact Sandra McPhee at Knowes Housing Association on 01389 877752 option 5 or [smcphoe@knowes.org](mailto:smcphoe@knowes.org) or Tony Ercoli from Flourishing Faifley at [flourishingfaifley.tony@gmail.com](http://flourishingfaifley.tony@gmail.com)



## Faifley Foodshare



Your local Community Pantry  
starting Tuesday 3rd May  
Choose your tins and goods  
from our stock for £2.50

FAIFLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL



# A tribute to Thomas Millar, 1970 - 2022



Thomas Millar, Housing Officer, at Knowes HA sadly passed away on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022. We would like to thank our customers and everyone who knew Thomas for all the lovely posts about Thomas on Knowes' Facebook page. The staff at Knowes would also like to pay tribute to their colleague and friend with their fond remembrances of him.

*"I joined Knowes HA in October 2017 and met Thomas on my first day in the job as his new Manager. As my time wore on at Knowes I got to know Thomas well and was struck by his positive outlook and his desire to help his tenants and colleagues with little or no complaint or moan. Thomas was very easy going and happy to help, and in my early days a great support in allowing me to get to know Knowes tenants and the area, help that I was forever grateful for. His love of cars and motorbikes and for his family, especially his daughter Holly, was always part of our chats and showed the passionate and loving character that he was. The workplace and our lives will never be the same without Thomas and although his last few months were a struggle, he fought a brave fight and continued to be positive, rarely showing how ill he was, spending time on asking how you were which showed the true character of our friend and colleague. Words cannot describe the loss we feel, Thomas you were a gentleman and a friend. RIP."*

*"Thomas was a joy to work alongside. I was very lucky to have been his colleague for 9 years within Housing Management. He made me laugh every day and he always looked on the bright side of life. He was a lovely friend and great person and I am very thankful for knowing him"*

*"Thomas  
Special memories of you will always bring a smile  
If only we could have you back for just a little while  
We could sit and laugh again just like we used to do  
You always meant so very much and always will do too  
The fact that you're no longer here will always cause us pain  
But you're forever in our hearts until we meet again"*



*"I was lucky to have been Thomas's friend and colleague for 28 years.*

*We laughed a lot!*

*We sang a lot (well Thomas made me sing for him as he thought I was his personal jukebox) and we were a wee bit silly a lot!*

*He was one of the most laid back people I've ever met and nothing was a problem if you needed his help.*

*I'll miss you Thomas"*

*"Thomas was fun to work with and had many loves in his life with his cars, motorbikes, cycling and of course Australia, but most of all was a very proud and doting father. He will be sadly missed."*





*"Thomas was a true friend and colleague and our world is less bright without you in it. He loved having a laugh with his 'work wives' and he was always het for making us tea because we'd tell him he was the best at it. Our hearts will be forever broken and you'll be missed every day."*



*"I worked with Thomas for nearly 25 years and in all that time all I saw from him was goodness, patience and kindness to everyone. Thomas, you inspired us all and our world is a better place for you having been in it"*

*"As one of the newer employees, I only met Thomas once, but what a sound guy!!"*

*"Thomas - words cannot express how much you will be missed. It has been my pleasure to know you for over 24 years. There was rarely a cross word from you in all that time -and you had it hard working with all us females! You were always on hand to offer help especially when I needed a tyre changing on my car. You have been taken far too soon from everyone. I hope you are at peace, and I hope I will meet you sometime in the future."*



Our lovely Thomas has sadly passed  
You fought a brave battle until the end  
You will never be forgotten  
Hopefully one day our hearts will mend

You really loved your motorbikes  
And had a passion for sports cars too  
Your garden was your pride and joy  
You were the tidiest guy we knew

You made the best tea in the office  
And you were constantly in demand  
At nights out, your dance card was always full  
Even when some of us could hardly stand

For years you had such a baby face  
And always looked so youthful  
But then you started to grow a beard  
We couldn't help but be truthful

Although we had such fun in the office  
You weren't just a colleague, you were our friend  
Alana and Holly were your 2 favourite girls  
And your Number 1 priority right to the end

So Tommy Millar, we will all miss you  
Everyone will enjoy these stories we've shared  
Your work family will never forget you  
You knew how much we all loved you and cared x





# Stop the Fly-Tippers

Fly-tipping is illegal and anyone who dumps anything on land (public or private) is committing an offence and may be fined up to £40,000. The West Dunbartonshire Council's Litter Control Team can issue a £200 Fixed Penalty fine to any person who fly tips.

If you see anyone fly-tipping or dumping rubbish illegally, this can be reported to Zero Waste Scotland – Dumb Dumpers on **0300 777 2292** (please do not approach anyone or put yourself in danger).

For any illegal fly-tipping or dumped waste you might find, these can be reported to West Dunbartonshire Council on **01389 772059**, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 3.30pm or out of hours on **0800 1971004**.



## Free bus travel for under-22s

Young people aged 5-21 living in Scotland can now apply to access free bus travel from 31 January 2022.

Parents or guardians can apply for their children if aged between 5-15 to access the scheme by applying on their behalf. Young people aged 16-21 should apply themselves.

The Transport Scotland website (<https://www.transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/young-persons-free-bus-travel-scheme/>) provides all the information needed to apply.

Applications can be made at the following:

Online at **GETYOURNEC.SCOT**

Local council: if you cannot, or do not want to, apply online please email **contactcentre@west-dunbarton.gov.uk** or phone **01389 738282**

## Owner Occupier Invoices – Increase in Unmetered Electricity Supplies



We have received confirmation from Scottish Power that from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 the cost per unit for unmetered supplies has been increased from 12p to 47p.

This increase will be applied to owners for usage from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 which you will see on your invoices due to be issued from July onwards.

Costs for supplies provided by Total Gas & Power Energies, British Gas and Southern Electric are still awaited.

As with all energy increases, we have no control over this and only recharge to owners what we have been charged. We will continue to try and source the best possible price when looking at renewing contracts.





# Rock Art Project - The Cochno Stones

The initial work began to uncover the 4,000 year old prehistoric rock art in Auchnacraig wood in 2016 and when the pandemic hit the project had to stop.

We are now pleased to announce that the work to seek funding for the project to create a Heritage Trail as well as other projects within the woods has now resumed.

Knowes are working with a number of organisations looking for funding applications and other projects that will get the community involved in the Rock Art.

Keep an eye out on our website and Facebook page for more updates.

## Owners Building Insurance



Owners who are in the factoring service will have been issued with a copy of their new buildings insurance policy. Please note that for any claims relating to water damage the excess has been increased to £350. This was out with our control and is due to the number of claims, for this, being made on insurance policies nationwide.

Knowes Housing Association will continue to monitor this situation and take account of this when the tendering process commences.

### Payment

We would like to remind owners that you can make a payment towards your owner occupier account by logging onto our portal. Instructions have been issued on how to do this but if you need any more information please contact a member of the Corporate Services Team on 01389-877752, option 5 or email [info@knowes.org](mailto:info@knowes.org). Payments can be made 24/7 so no need to wait until the office is open.

# Staff Updates

In March 2022 we welcomed our first Modern Apprentice, Ethan Hart to our team.

Ethan will mainly be working within and Maintenance & Repairs Team as well as working towards an SVQ qualification in Business Administration.



Following Erica Davidson's successful appointment as CEO, we welcomed Kennedy Chilambe as the new Head of Finance.



We wish them both the best within their new roles with the Association.

We bid a fond farewell to Elaine Stevenson who leaves us after 8 months working within the Maintenance & Repairs Team covering Kirsty Wood, who was on Maternity Leave.

We wish Elaine the best for the future from all your colleagues and Committee at Knowes HA.



# Results of rent consultation exercise, rent increase 2022 and projected budgets 2022/23

Last April we were able to offer a rent freeze with no increase to the rent charges. We were clear then that this was not sustainable over the long term. Thus, in December 2021 we asked all our tenants for their opinion on our proposed rent increase to be applied on 1/4/2022 for the forthcoming year.

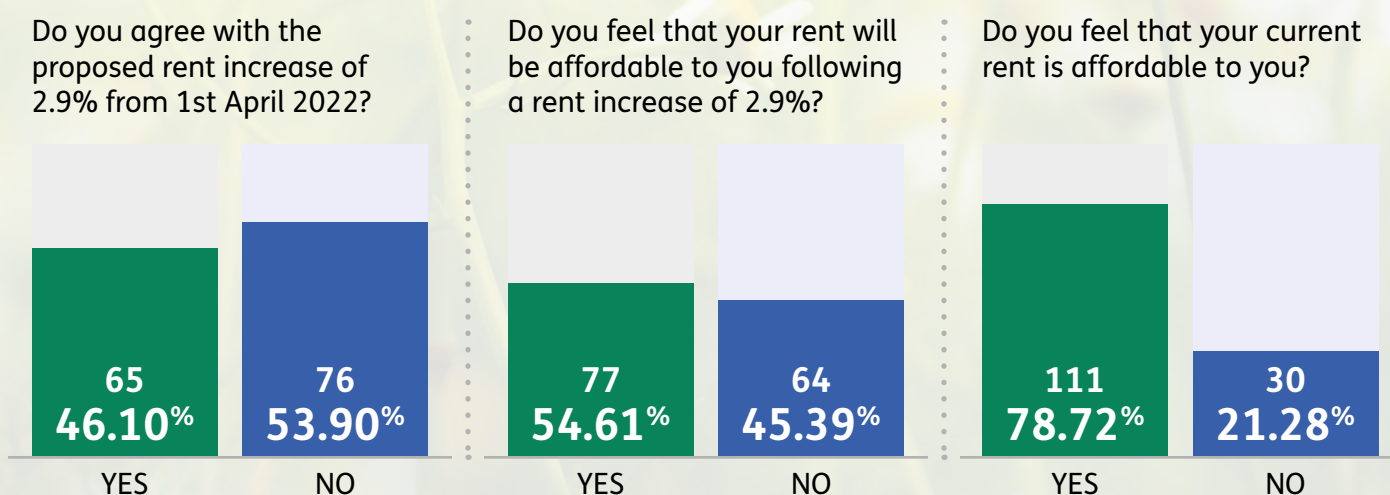
The committee's main objective in the process is to ensure our rents remain affordable to our residents whilst maintaining a financially viable business

plan. This is one where we can balance income received with being able to meet all our expenses. We believe that we have achieved this by offering a below inflation rent increase to our tenants of 2.9% for 2022/23. Inflation is currently running at 6.2% and Knowes' contractors have increased their charges to us by at least 10% across all costs.

In offering a 2.9% increase we have managed to maintain our record of below sector average increase and below sector average rents.

Year	Average rent increase		Average weekly rent	
	Knowes HA	RSL average	Knowes HA	RSL average
2020/21	0%	1.22%	£80.64	£83.78
2019/20	1.7%	2.49%	£79.26	£81.47
2018/19	2.6%	2.97%	£77.25	£79.07

The results of our rent consultation exercise were as follows:-



141 out of 1046 (13.4%) of tenants responded to our survey. Although 53.9% did not agree with the proposed rent increase, 54.61% of those who answered felt that their rent would still be affordable following the increase.

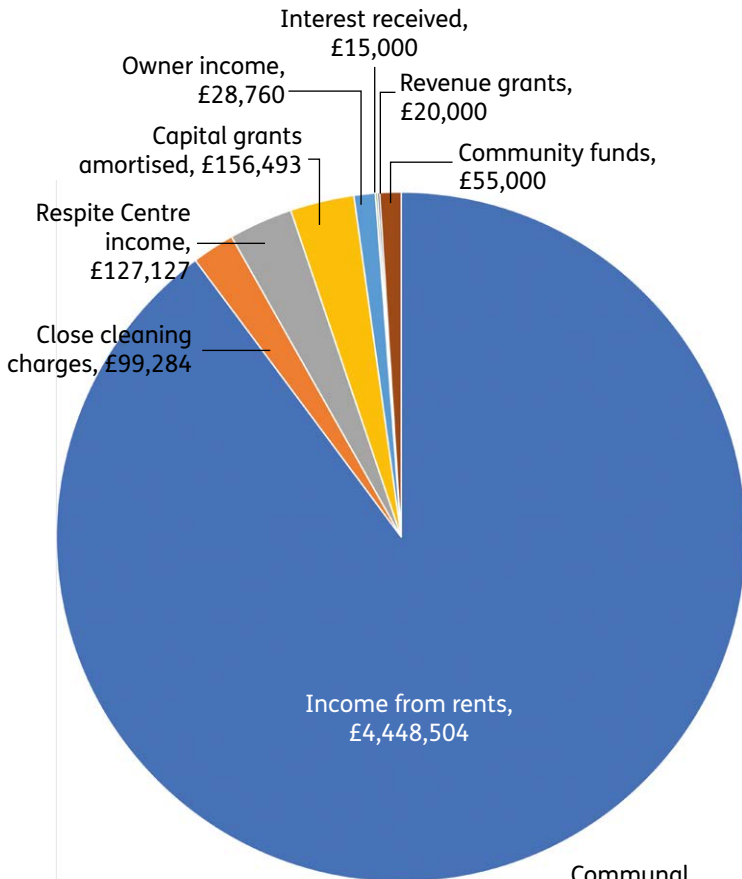
Thanks to all who took part in the rent consultation exercise and we will be following up on the comments which were made in order to improve our service to you.



# Budgets 2022/23

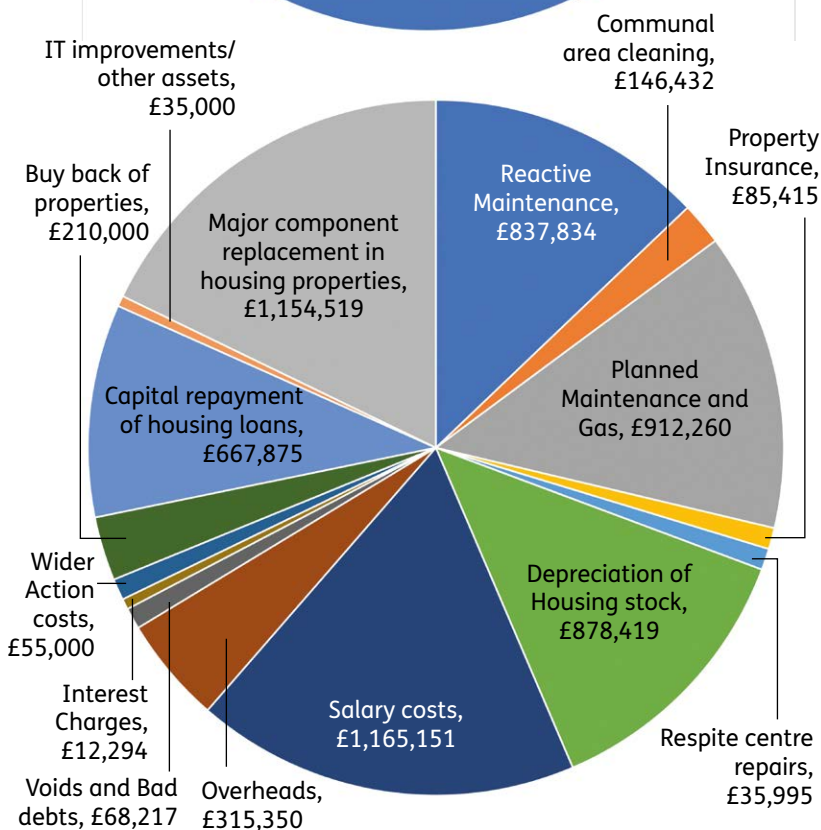
In February 2022, the Management Committee approved the following budgets for income and expenditure for the new financial year 2022/23.

## Income budgets 2022/23



This year we will spend £1,614,351 on major repairs to the properties. This will follow a programme of works. It will include the delayed spend during the Covid 19 pandemic when we experienced a shortage of materials and labour.

During 2022-23 we plan to spend:





# Universal Credit - Updating your Housing Costs - Annual Rent Increase

If you are claiming Universal Credit you will receive a notification on your journal asking you to 'Confirm your housing costs'

Universal Credit will add a 'Confirm your housing costs' to-do to tenants' online accounts on:

- 1 April 2022 for those that pay rent monthly

Universal Credit will ask tenants to complete the to-do by the end of their current assessment period, to ensure they get the correct housing payment.

Knowes HA sent you a letter last month confirming your new rent and service charges, please have this to hand before you log onto your journal.

You will be asked:

- Has your rent changed? – Answer: yes
- Have your service charges changed? – Answer: yes
- When did your housing costs change? – Answer: 01/04/2022
- How much will you be charged for your new rent (excluding service charges)? – Please look at your rent increase letter
- How frequent is your new rent? – Answer: monthly
- Do you have any rent free weeks? Answer: no
- How much will you be charged for your new service charges (where applicable)? - Please look at your rent increase letter.



- How frequent is your new service charge – Answer: monthly

You MUST do this online on or as soon possible after the 1st April 2022. If you are a telephone claimant, you must phone **0800 3285644** to update your rent details. Failure to do so may mean you will not receive enough money to cover your rent charge.

If you need any help or assistance, or are unsure what your new rent charge is, please contact us on **01389 877752** and select Option 3 for your Housing Officer or email [info@knowes.org](mailto:info@knowes.org)

## Voluntary Committee Members Wanted

We are particularly interested in receiving applications from:

- our tenants and members of their household
- our factored owners and members of their household
- residents in areas where we provide housing

As well as helping to improve the lives of others, you will be contributing to the development of the communities of Faifley and Duntocher. The training and experience you receive as a Committee member will also assist in improving your own career prospects. We will reimburse out of pocket expenses, including childcare and travelling costs for attending meetings. We provide induction training together with supporting ongoing personal development.

Our Management Committee currently meets on the first Tuesday of each month at the Association's office in Faifley at 6.30pm.

If you are interested in becoming a Committee member, please telephone the office on **01389 877752 option 5** and we will send you an application form. Or alternatively you may wish to phone and ask to speak to Erica Davidson for an informal chat on this opportunity.