



in this issue

Rent Consultation

Getting to Know You

Tenants' Voice

Ready Scotland

Christmas & New Year Holidays



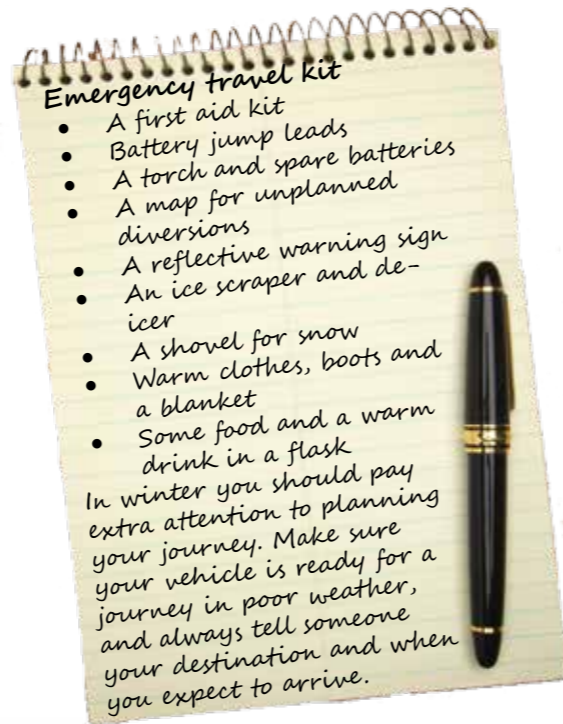
Ready Scotland - Scottish Government website with advice for Winter Weather

The **Scottish Government** has launched an excellent website with **advice for severe weather**. Severe weather can cause a range of problems but you can be ready for them. By doing a few small things now, you can save yourself a lot of trouble later on.

There are tips on how to **prepare for bad weather** at **home**, at **work**, in your **community** and when you are **on the move**. There are **telephone numbers** for you to contact the emergency services if you need to, and suggestions for **putting together "emergency kits"** in preparation for some of the problems that you might face, like **losing power or your water supply**.

There are videos showing you how to **insulate your pipes** and find your **stop valve**.

<http://www.readyscotland.org>



Christmas and New Year Holiday Dates

The Association will be closed on **Wednesday 24th, Thursday 25th & Friday 26th December 2014**

and

Wednesday 31st December 2014, Thursday 1st & Friday 2nd January 2015

The Contact phone number for **Out of Hours Emergency Repairs is now 01478 612035**

We would like to wish all our tenants **A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**



New Developments

Work is progressing well at the Association's development of **17 properties at Phase 6(b), Home Farm, Portree**, which includes **4 houses for NHS Highland**. In addition, the new **Police Hostel** is scheduled to start after the Christmas break.

Also in the new year, the Association will be constructing **8 new properties** on behalf of **The Highland Council** at the former dairy site at **Balmacara**. This development is due for completion in **Autumn 2015**.



Phase 6(b), Home Farm, Portree

A planning application for **12 flats** at the corner shop and gap site at **Main Street, Kyle**, will be submitted before this Christmas. The application includes **commercial premises** on the ground floor.

Property Surveys

Our individual tenanted **property surveys** are almost complete and if you have not already had a visit, we will be in contact with you to arrange a suitable time and date for your survey to take place.

In addition, our **Property Services Officers** will be carrying out their regular **Estate Management Surveys** on a **quarterly basis** starting in **January 2015**. These surveys are designed to ensure that you live in a **safe, secure and decent environment** and they provide you with the opportunity to speak with our **Property Services Officers** on their rounds and to raise any issues or concerns.

Estate Surveys will be carried out by **Wilfar Matheson** in **South Skye** and the **Mainland** and by **Gavin Convery** in **North Skye**.



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If you would like to receive this document in another format or language, please contact us on 01478 612035 or e-mail: info@LSHA.co.uk and we will forward a copy to you.



Rent Setting Policy Consultation 2015/2016

The Association is required to regularly review its rents and service charges. This is your opportunity to **comment on our proposals for the charges that will apply from 1 April 2015.**

What does your rent pay for?

All rental income received by the Association is set aside to pay for the cost of the services we provide to tenants.

Included within these costs are:-

- The management of our housing stock, including items like staff costs, insurance premiums and office expenses.
- Day-to-day repairs, e.g. faulty heating systems, electrical problems, burst pipes, etc.
- Cyclical Maintenance which includes our external painting and ground maintenance programmes.
- Planned Maintenance involving installing replacement kitchens, bathrooms, doors, windows and heating systems.
- Loan charges on the money we borrow to construct our properties.

How do our rents compare to other similar landlords?

As part of our Policy, we need to ensure that our rents are comparable to the rents charged by similar social landlords in Scotland and we have consistently managed to achieve this. A comparison of our rents and those of the other main housing providers in the Highlands and Islands area is shown below.

Weekly Rents	2 Apt	3 Apt	4 Apt	5 Apt
Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership	£79.82	£84.23	£99.54	£109.86
Albyn Housing Society	£65.48	£74.28	£81.23	£91.32
Hjaltland Housing Association	£71.57	£79.21	£82.79	£95.11
Lochaber Housing Association	£72.55	£73.51	£80.02	£92.40
Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association	£62.79	£68.24	£75.29	£79.92
Orkney Housing Association	£65.74	£72.11	£77.02	£84.04
Pentland Housing Association	£51.34	£59.68	£74.82	£85.20
The Moray Housing Partnership	£60.30	£71.14	£80.35	£93.27
West Highland Housing Association	£70.86	£82.78	£92.03	£109.52

The information in the above table is based on data supplied by each RSL as at 31 March 2014

Management Committee members

The Association is delighted to welcome **Morag Hannah** onto the Management Committee.

Morag is the Centre Manager for the **Citizens Advice Bureau** in Portree and she will make a valuable contribution to the Committee meetings.

If you have an interest in **housing** and the **welfare of social tenants**, we would like to invite you to become a Management Committee member. An application pack outlining the criteria required to becoming a Committee Member can be obtained by telephoning **01478 612035** or e-mailing **info@LSHA.co.uk**.

Please let us have your views no later than 31st JANUARY 2015

What is the proposed rent increase in 2015/2016?

The Association is proposing to increase rents from 1st April 2015 by the **Consumer Price Index** figure in October 2014 (1.3%) plus 1%. This is the increase we calculate that we need in order to continue to provide the level of services that tenants require.

2 Apt	3 Apt	4 Apt	5 Apt
£64.23	£69.81	£77.02	£81.76

Projected weekly costs from 1 April 2015

Why the increase?

The Association's costs are subject to inflationary pressures and many of our costs are increasing by more than the rate of inflation, particularly insurance premiums, repair charges and building costs.

Will Service Charges increase?

Yes. It is proposed that these increase in line with the change to rents.

What happens next?

We are inviting all our tenants to respond to this consultation exercise by **31st January, 2015**. All comments and submissions will be considered by our Management Committee who will take the final decision on rent levels for 2015/2016. We will then advise tenants of their new rent figure **no later than the end of February 2015**.

Let the Tenants' Voice be heard....

The Association is very keen to encourage tenants and occupiers to let us know how you feel we are doing. Everyone should have their individual needs recognised, be treated fairly and with respect, and receive fair access to housing and housing services.

You should find it easy to communicate with us and get the information you need. You should be able to participate in and influence our decisions at a level you feel comfortable with.

With this in mind, we have formed a **Tenants' Voice group**, which is open to any of our tenants or occupiers with an interest in reviewing the Association's work. No specific skills are needed, just your experience of being one of our tenants or occupiers.

A **handout** with full details of the **Tenants' Voice group**, including **how to get in touch with us** if you are interested in taking part, is enclosed with this Newsletter.

Getting to Know You ...

Our **Housing Services Officer** has sent out a form to all tenants to make sure that the information we have about you and the members of your household is **up-to-date and accurate**.

We would be grateful if you could take the time to fill in the form and post it back to the address below:-

Maureen Taylor
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