

SEASONS GREETINGS FROM ALL AT LOREBURN



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BIG THANK
YOU TO OUR
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**Blooming
Loreburn 2024**
Celebrating Our
Green-Fingered
Champions!



Creating GREAT places to live



Welcome

As we approach the festive season, all of us at Loreburn would like to extend our warmest wishes to you and your loved ones. We hope that your Christmas is filled with love, laughter, and good health, and that the New Year brings you happiness and peace.

We understand that this time of year can be especially challenging for some, particularly for those facing financial hardship or other difficulties. While the festive season is often portrayed in a certain way, we know that Christmas means something different to everyone, and it's important that we each celebrate in a way that feels right for us. If you are struggling, please remember that we are here to help. If we can't provide direct support, we will do our best to point you in the direction of other organisations that may be able to assist.

Looking back over the past year, it has been a busy and challenging one for all of us. But we've also made progress, and we're excited about the future. In this issue of Loreburn Living, we share some updates on the work we've been doing, including the welcoming of two new members to our Executive Team. We also look ahead to the improvements we plan to make to our services and homes in the year to come.

We hope you find this newsletter informative and enjoyable, and we thank you for your continued support.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Kirsteen

Kirsteen McGinn, CEO



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Meet the Executive Team *We Want to Hear From You!*

Last year, I was honoured to join Loreburn as Chief Executive, and we've since welcomed Tony McInnes as our Director of Finance and Fiona Campbell as our Director of Operations. We're also pleased to have Elkie Hamid Astley, one of the original members of the senior team, continuing in her role as Director of Corporate Services.

As a team, we are committed to making sure Loreburn continues its mission to provide quality homes across the region and are eager to hear directly from you, our tenants, to understand what we're doing well and where we can improve. Following our Strategic Planning Event, where we focused on "getting the basics right," we want to take this opportunity to listen to you and get your feedback about the delivery of our services.

Whether it's something we're doing that's working well, or areas where you feel we could do better, we want to know what's important to you. If we're not getting things right, we want to make the necessary changes to ensure we meet your needs and expectations.

We'd love the chance to chat with as many of you as possible in the coming months. We are happy to meet in person, or if that's not convenient, we can connect over a video call, phone call, email, or even text — whatever works best for you.

Kirsteen

Kirsteen McGinn

Chief Executive



Kirsteen joined Loreburn in June

2023, bringing over 30 years of experience in the housing sector. With a background spanning housing management and property services, Kirsteen is deeply passionate about the positive impact of providing safe, warm, and affordable homes. Her role centres on strategic leadership, tenant engagement, and fostering partnerships across Dumfries and Galloway.

Elkie Hamid Astley

Director of Corporate Services



Elkie has been with Loreburn since 2018,

and currently serves as our Director of Corporate Services. Her remit includes overseeing Organisational Development, HR, Employee Engagement, Health & Safety, and Governance. Elkie's extensive background in corporate services is supported by her role as a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD. She also volunteers as a Trustee for Dumfries Advocacy Service, a role that reflects her commitment to community well-being.

Fiona Campbell

Director of Operations



Fiona oversees key areas such as

housing management, property services, and tenant support. Her role is pivotal in ensuring we deliver a tenant-focused service. Fiona's team is dedicated to supporting tenants in their day-to-day needs, from managing repairs and maintenance to ensuring neighbourhoods are safe, welcoming, and well-maintained. With a focus on both immediate and long-term property investment, Fiona works to enhance the overall experience for all of our tenants, ensuring homes and communities remain well-cared-for.

Tony McInnes

Director of Finance



Tony brings a wealth of knowledge and leadership

experience to his role as Director of Finance, with a background in professional services, construction, consultancy, housing development, and recruitment. As a qualified accountant, Tony oversees all aspects of Loreburn's financial management, from budgeting and forecasting to financial reporting and strategic planning. His goal is to ensure the financial sustainability of the organisation, enabling us to deliver on investment in our homes while continuing to offer a high level of customer service.



Our annual GREAT Big Thank You initiative has once again shone a spotlight on the incredible community spirit among our tenants. This special recognition celebrates those who go above and beyond to help their neighbours and make our communities stronger.

A particularly touching example of neighbourly kindness comes from Lochdale, Stranraer, where three tenants - John, Douglas, and Ralph - have shown exceptional compassion and support for another neighbour after he experienced ill health that affected his mobility.

The trio stepped in to help and support George around his home and ensured he could enjoy time in the communal garden, bringing sunshine to his days. Their support and kindness made a real difference to their neighbour's quality of life.

To recognise their outstanding community spirit, our Neighbourhood Officer Paul made special visits to surprise John, Douglas, and Ralph with a small thank you gift that said a GREAT BIG THANK YOU from us!

This kind of community support transforms our housing developments from simple buildings into true communities where people look out for each other. It's these everyday acts of kindness that make our neighbourhoods GREAT places to live.

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY HEROES



John receiving his thank you hamper

Food Train Lunch Club at J M Barrie House



Earlier this year, Food Train approached us about hosting regular lunch events for our tenants, where their staff and volunteers would prepare and serve a lunchtime meal.

To get started, we held a taster session in back in June. This allowed us to gather feedback from tenants on the types of foods they'd like to see, pricing, and how often they'd want the events to take place.

The response was overwhelmingly positive and as a result, we've now established a fortnightly Lunch Club. The club has been running since July and those attending are enjoying a variety of hot soups, filled rolls, salad boxes, and more - both in our communal lounge at JM Barrie House and as takeaway options.

Tenant feedback has been fantastic, with comments like "it's something to look forward to", "the food is excellent", and "the biweekly events feel just right".

These lunch events have been a wonderful way to support our tenants, providing great opportunities for socialisation and community building.

Looking ahead, a special Christmas Lunch event is planned for December, where Food Train will be providing a hot festive menu. We're also planning a group outing to their new Dumfries facility in the near future.



HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

Call or email, and our Customer & Business Support Team will route your enquiry directly to us.

Phone: 01387 321 300 • Email: customerservice@loreburn.org.uk

A Vibrant New Community at Scott's Way

Scott's Way is our newest later living development, having opened its doors late 2023. In that short time, the community has developed a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Tenants have come together to share meals, celebrate holidays, and forge new friendships.

On 29th October, Scott's Way hosted a cosy lunch featuring two flavours of hearty soup served with hot crusty rolls. Tenants greatly enjoyed this opportunity to gather and dine together.

Then on 31st October, tenants got into the Halloween spirit with a themed lunch and quiz. A group of tenants worked hard to create festive homemade decorations that added to the spooky ambience! Everyone had fun dressing up for the occasion, and Nora won the prize for best costume as a witch.

Looking ahead, Scott's Way is gearing up for the Christmas season. Decorations will go up in early December, and a special Christmas event is planned for the 19th. This will include various Christmas-themed games like musical bingo for tenants and staff to enjoy together.



Carnation Crescent Community Catch-Up

Even the rain couldn't dampen spirits at the Carnation Crescent community pop-up event in October.

The event was made extra special thanks to our fantastic partners: Lemon Aid, our local police force, fire service, and the community safety team who were on hand to meet tenants and share important information.

Would you like to see a similar event near you? Your Neighbourhood Officer can help make it happen! Get in touch with them to discuss organising a pop-up event in your area.

Stay tuned for news about upcoming events through email, text messages and social media. We look forward to seeing even more faces at our next community gathering!



Supporting Young Futures

Our Neighbourhood Officers Lauren and Adam joined other local employers at Sanquhar Academy's Positive Futures event on November 12th. The event gave S2 and S3 pupils valuable insights into various career paths through interactive employability workshops.

Students had the opportunity to learn about the varied roles within housing associations and the vital work we do in supporting communities. Lauren and Adam shared their experiences of working in the housing sector, highlighting just how rewarding a career in social housing can be. They also shared information about the different routes into the profession.

By participating in initiatives like Positive Futures, we're helping to bridge the gap between education and employment, helping to ensure young people can make informed decisions about their future careers while understanding the opportunities available right on their doorstep.

A career in housing is hugely rewarding and by sharing our experiences we hope to inspire and attract young people to join us and make a difference.



Survey Winner Spotlight

Congratulations to Andrew from Station Road, Dalbeattie, who won a £25 Tesco voucher in our recent tenant satisfaction survey draw for new build properties.

Andrew was among the residents who gave his feedback on his new home, and the voucher was personally delivered by our team member Nicola.

Your feedback helps us to understand how well we're meeting your needs and where we can improve. While prizes aren't available for all surveys, we appreciate each and every response we receive.

Watch out for announcements of future prize draws, but please do continue sharing your feedback whenever you can!



Blooming Loreburn 2024: Celebrating Our Green-Fingered Champions!

2024 was another outstanding year for our Blooming Loreburn gardening competition and the judges were thoroughly impressed by the high standard of entries, making their decisions a little tough.

In the "Best Garden or Display" category, our winner created what judges described as a stunning and thoughtfully designed space featuring beautifully bordered grass areas and raised beds bursting with colourful shrubs and plants.

The "Most Creative" category winner showed exactly what's possible with a smaller space. Their design incorporated coloured stone chips and clever corner planting, creating a pleasing backdrop for a cosy seating area.

Kirklea Place claimed the title for "Best Development," with judges praising the impressive collective effort of tenants. The development stood out for its well-maintained colourful borders and clever use of pots to enhance walled areas.

If you're inspired by this year's winners, why not start planning your garden for next year's competition? Whether you're an experienced gardener or just starting out, there's a category for everyone.



Your Feedback Matters - Complaints Update



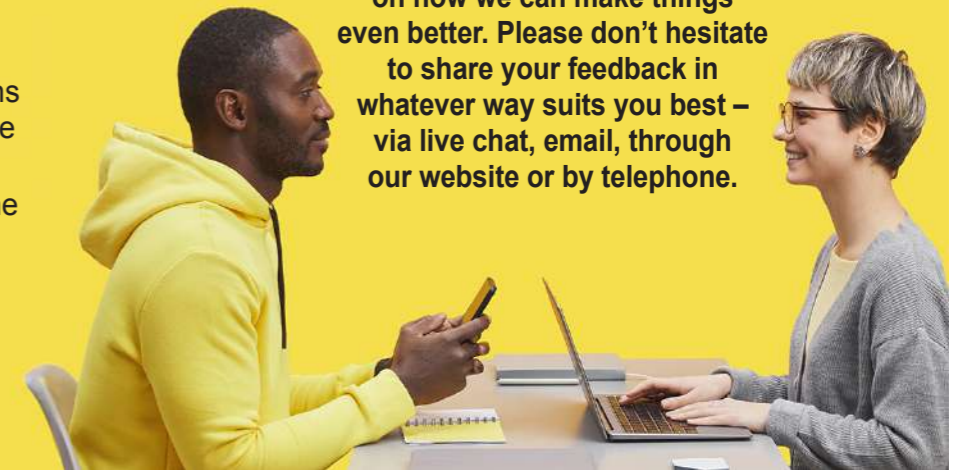
We take all feedback seriously, and as a result of what you have told us, changes have been made to our complaints process. These changes will help ensure you get the best possible experience and feel assured your concerns are dealt with swiftly. All staff have completed dedicated complaints training, ensuring a consistent approach across the organisation. We try to take learnings from every complaint, even where we don't uphold a complaint.

Current performance data shows that we are handling your concerns quickly – with straightforward issues (Stage 1 complaints) being resolved within 4 days (or an average of 3.7 days), while more complex matters (Stage 2) are typically responded to fully within 22 days (an average of 21.6 days).

We understand the importance of building trust and maintaining open communication with tenants. Thanks to your feedback so far, we have made some improvements as a direct result of what you told us. We have:

- Introduced a new view on our scheduling system to ensure follow ups are checked daily
- Reviewed and updated our internal policies
- Involved tenants in decisions about Grounds Maintenance
- Introduced regular training sessions to ensure everyone – our staff and contractors alike – delivers on our communication promise to you
- Built stronger partnerships with our contractors.

We're always keen to hear your thoughts on how we can make things even better. Please don't hesitate to share your feedback in whatever way suits you best – via live chat, email, through our website or by telephone.



Planned Investments Update

Our Investment and Sustainability team have been busy continuing the scheduled programme of home improvements across our homes. Here's an update on what we've completed recently and what you can expect in the coming months.



We've now finished installing new windows and doors at Caledonian Place, Dumfries, and similar work has been completed at Palace Court, Castle Douglas and Melbourne Avenue, Eastriggs. The new triple-glazed windows and composite front doors are specially designed to keep homes warmer and heating bills lower.

The new windows have a special seal between the frame and the wall that helps keep warm air in and cold air out. The front doors are made from strong composite materials and come with separate letter boxes mounted on the wall – this might seem like a small change, but it makes a big difference in preventing heat loss!



KITCHEN IMPROVEMENTS WILL SOON BEGIN AT:

- Swans Vennel, Dumfries
- McKenzie Terrace, Dumfries
- Burntscarthgreen, Locharbriggs, Dumfries
- Queen Street, Dumfries
- Bruce Street, Annan



NEW BATHROOMS ARE PLANNED FOR:

- Donald Court, Castle Douglas
- Loreburn Court, Annan
- Gillwood Road, Eastriggs
- Ladyknowe, Moffat
- Melbourne Avenue, Eastriggs

Heating Upgrades at Royston Road and Bengairn View



We've also been making progress on planned heating improvements at Royston Road and Bengairn View in Castle Douglas, where storage heaters and electric hot water systems are being removed and upgraded with air source heat pumps. These works are part of our larger planned improvements programme that you can find on our website noticeboard: <https://www.loreburn.org.uk/planned-maintenance-programme-2024---2026/>

These modern, efficient systems are designed to keep homes warm, provide reliable hot water, help reduce carbon emissions, and can help to save money on bills.

At the end of October, we had a special visit from TRIANCO, the company that makes these heating systems. They brought along a demonstration van so tenants and staff could see exactly how the new systems work. This gave everyone a chance to ask questions and see the controls up close.

One of our tenants who already has the new system installed was delighted with the results...

"I could only afford to use one heater and had to turn off the hot water to save money. With the new air source heat pump I have all radiators at 22 degrees and hot water at the push of a button which is excellent. My home is warmer and more affordable".

Investing in homes is a key priority and we're pleased to see the positive impact these new heating systems have brought for tenants. By investing in air source heat pumps, we're not only enhancing comfort and reducing energy costs but also supporting a more sustainable future.

Keep an eye on our website for further updates as we continue our planned improvements throughout the rest of the financial year.



Retrofit Pilot Success!

If you follow us on social media or have visited the website recently, you may have seen that two of our homes - a bungalow and a house at Smith Way, Beattock - have achieved the prestigious AECB Carbonlite Retrofit Standard.

The AECB (Association for Environment Conscious Building) sets this high standard to recognise homes that have been retrofitted in a way that's tailored to their unique needs. Retrofitting involves upgrading homes to improve their energy efficiency and sustainability, making homes more comfortable, sustainable, and more cost effective to run.

Looking ahead, we're using the data and learning from the project to help inform future improvement programmes and to develop a Loreburn standard. This will help to ensure that the elements we focus on give the best returns in tenant comfort, energy efficiency and running costs.



Stock Condition Surveys

Alongside retrofit work, we're also continuing the programme of stock condition surveys across all properties. This allows us to gather important information about the quality and performance of our housing stock, and whether homes are meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

The data we collect from the surveys is important as it informs future investment decisions and maintenance planning.

Grounds Maintenance Consultation

Thank you to all tenants who came along to one of our recent Community Catch-up events, and to all those who provided feedback on grounds maintenance services.

We're now reviewing all the comments and suggestions and we'll be in touch with those of you who requested further discussions to better understand your needs and priorities.

The consultation ended on 13th December. The next step is to take all of your feedback and use it to develop the specification for the grounds maintenance contract, which will be tendered in the new year.

Once the tender process is complete, we'll share the outcome and explain what changes you can expect to see in the management of grounds and communal areas.



Aids & Adaptations

We recently received news about our government funding for aids and adaptations for the current financial year (April 2024 to March 2025). Unfortunately, the amount of funding has been significantly reduced compared to previous years.

This reduction in funding will impact the level of aids and adaptations work we're able to deliver for our tenants. If you have an outstanding occupational therapy (OT) referral with us, we will be in touch to let you know where your request sits in our current programme.

It's important to note that due to the funding constraints, the waiting time for any new OT referrals is currently 12-18 months.

Warm Home Discount Scheme

As the colder months approach, managing energy bills can be a real challenge, especially for those on lower incomes. The Warm Home Discount Scheme provides financial assistance to help eligible households keep their homes warm during the winter.

The Warm Home Discount Scheme is a government-backed initiative that offers a one-off £150 discount on electricity bills between October 2024 and March 2025. In some cases, energy suppliers may also allow you to apply the discount to your gas bill if you use the same provider for both fuels.

There are two main routes to qualify for the Warm Home Discount:

Core Group: If you receive the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit, you automatically qualify for the discount and will receive a letter from your supplier confirming your eligibility. You don't need to apply - the £150 discount will be applied directly to your electricity account.

Broader Group: This category covers other low-income households that meet specific criteria set by individual energy suppliers. Eligibility is often based on factors like receiving certain means-tested benefits, having a total household income below a set threshold, or living with someone considered vulnerable, such as a young child or elderly relative.

The application process and eligibility rules can vary between suppliers, so it's important to check with your energy provider to understand if you qualify for the Warm Home Discount Scheme under the Broader Group. Many major providers like British Gas, Scottish Power, and SSE participate, but smaller suppliers may have different requirements.

If you do qualify under the Broader Group, you'll typically need to apply for the discount through your supplier's website or by phone. Make sure to apply as early as possible, as the number of discounts available is limited.

Priority Services from Energy Networks

Did you know that Scotland's energy networks offer extra support through a Priority Services Register? This register helps them identify and assist customers who may need a little more help, such as those over 60, people with special communication needs or who are dependent on electricity for home or medical care, people living with a young child, or those living with a chronic illness.

By signing up to the Priority Services Register, your energy network will try to proactively contact you if they are aware of a power issue in your local area. They can also notify you in advance of planned power cuts, provide regular updates during an unplanned outage, and even connect you with partner organisations that can offer services like money advice and healthy living support.

To register for these additional services, simply get in touch with your energy network provider. SP Energy Networks has a dedicated Priority Services line at 0330 10 10 167 where you can find out more and sign up to the register.

Protecting You & Your Home: Fire Safety Matters

From our regular 'Test it Tuesday' reminders, to other advice about fire safety, we place fire safety very high on our list of advice and support to tenants.

Unfortunately, we have recently seen an increase in fire-related incidents.

Most fires in our homes start unexpectedly – from a forgotten pan on the stove, a carelessly discarded cigarette, or an overloaded electrical socket. These aren't just statistics; they're real risks that can change lives in moments.

A fire can be devastating. Along with the disruption and trauma for anyone affected, there are also significant costs: for repairs, temporary accommodation, and insurance excesses, among others.

If a fire is caused by carelessness, wilful actions, or there has been a history of fire related incidents, you could face recharging of repairs costs and potential tenancy implications.

Scottish Fire & Rescue Service offers free Home Fire Safety Visits. They can provide personalised advice to make your home safer.

Learn more about fire safety: Visit Scottish Fire & Rescue Service website for comprehensive fire safety guidance.

SMOKING AND CANDLES

- Stub out cigarettes completely
- Never smoke in bed
- Use proper ashtrays
- Keep candles in secure holders away from flammable materials
- Consider LED candles

KITCHEN SAFETY

- Never leave cooking unattended
- Avoid cooking when tired or under the influence of alcohol
- Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker
- Check cooker is off after use
- Be careful with loose clothing near heat

HEATING AND APPLIANCES

- Secure portable heaters against walls
- Keep heaters away from curtains and furniture
- Store electric blankets flat
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for all appliances

These incident photos demonstrate an important fire safety lesson: properly closed fire doors can prevent catastrophic damage. In this case, the closed fire door contained the fire to a single area, protecting surrounding flats and the rest of the building from extensive damage.



ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- Keep electrical leads away from water
- Use one plug per socket
- Check for signs of damaged wiring
- Unplug appliances when not in use
- Look for British or European safety marks when buying electrical items

Festive Safety Tips

Christmas is a time of joy and celebration, but it can also bring increased fire risks into our homes.

As you prepare your home for the festivities, take a moment to review these essential fire safety tips...

CANDLE CARE

- Consider using battery-operated candles instead of real flames. If using real candles, always extinguish them before going to bed or leaving the room.
- Keep candles, matches, and lighters out of reach of children.
- Place candles on heat-resistant surfaces and away from anything flammable like Christmas trees, cards, and decorations.
- Never move a lit candle - use a candle snuffer to put it out.

ELECTRIC BLANKETS AND HEATING

- Unplug or switch off portable heaters when not in use. Always keep them away from curtains and furniture.
- The use of portable gas heaters is not permitted in your Loreburn home.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for electric blankets and have them regularly serviced.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS & DECORATIONS

- Unplug fairy lights and electrical decorations when leaving home or going to bed.
- Check lights are in good working order and use the correct fuse.
- Keep decorations away from heat sources like fires and heaters.



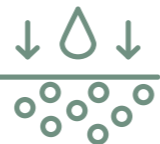
GENERAL FIRE SAFETY

- Test your smoke and heat alarms regularly to check they are working properly.
- Don't overload electrical sockets.
- Take extra care when cooking, especially if you've consumed alcohol.
- Keep an eye on older relatives or neighbours who may be more vulnerable.

By following these simple steps, you can help keep your family and home safe this season. Have a safe and merry Christmas!

Tackling Damp and Mould

We take reports of damp and mould very seriously. If you notice any signs of damp or mould in your home, it's important to let us promptly, so we can investigate and take the necessary actions.



When you get in touch, we'll ask a few quick questions to understand the problem. This helps us pinpoint the cause - whether it's penetrating damp, rising damp, plumbing leaks, or excessive condensation.

You can report any damp or mould concerns by calling our Repairs team at 01387 321 300, or if you prefer, you can complete a form online, via the website.

To help minimise the risk of damp and mould in your home, try these tips:

- Use extractor fans or open windows when cooking and bathing to remove moisture
- Dry clothes outdoors whenever possible, and use a well-ventilated room if drying inside
- Ensure adequate airflow by leaving space between walls and large furniture
- Avoid letting rooms get too cold - aim to keep temperatures above 14°C
- Report any plumbing issues or structural defects to us without delay

If you're concerned about damp, mould, or energy costs, please don't hesitate to get in touch - we're here to help and work with you to find the right solution for your home.



Frozen Pipes



Keeping your home warm and a steady temperature will help to prevent pipes freezing. If you can do this, and keep warm air circulating by opening interior doors or cabinet doors under sinks to allow warm air to reach plumbing you may avoid any frozen or burst pipes and keep all interior doors open. To keep frozen pipes at bay, it's a good idea to keep your house warm year-round. You can do this by putting the heating on regularly through winter, keeping all interior doors open, and disconnecting garden hoses when you've finished using them.

If a pipe bursts, turn off the water in your home immediately and report an emergency repair by calling 01387 321 300.

If you do have a frozen pipe, there are some simple steps you can take to get things flowing again:

1 STEP ONE

LOCATE THE FROZEN PIPE

First, find your cold water stopcock and turn off the water supply to your home. Then try turning on the taps - if water isn't coming out properly, that means the pipe leading to that tap is frozen. You may also be able to spot frozen pipes if they appear frosty or bulging.

2 STEP TWO

THAW ACCESSIBLE PIPES

If you can see and reach the frozen pipe, you can try to thaw it using a hairdryer or by wrapping it with hot towels. Never use an open flame. Work from the tap end of the pipe back towards the frozen section - this helps prevent pressure building up behind the blockage as it starts to melt.

3 STEP THREE

THAW INACCESSIBLE PIPES

- For pipes you can't directly access, try turning up the heating in your home and waiting for the warmth to reach the frozen area. This slower, gentler approach can be effective.

4 STEP FOUR

CALL FOR HELP IF NEEDED

If the pipe doesn't start to thaw using these methods, report the issue to us by phoning **01387 321 300**, and we'll send someone to assist.

Acting quickly will help to prevent significant water damage from a burst pipe. Please let us know if you need any help.

Managed Migration: Moving to Universal Credit

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is currently sending out letters to benefit customers about moving to Universal Credit. This important change affects anyone receiving Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).



Please wait until you receive your Universal Credit Migration Notice letter in the post from DWP before taking any action. This letter will tell you exactly when you need to move to Universal Credit and what steps to take. You'll have three months from the date of your letter to make your claim.

Many will be eligible for at least the same amount on Universal Credit as their previous benefits. If your Universal Credit amount would be less than your current benefits, you may qualify for 'transitional protection' to make up the difference.

For example, if you currently receive £700 in benefits but would only be entitled to £600 on Universal Credit, you would receive £100 in transitional protection, bringing your total back to £700. To receive this protection, you must apply for Universal Credit after receiving your Migration Notice letter, before the deadline date, and have no changes in your circumstances.

If you receive tax credits, make sure to claim Universal Credit by the date in your Migration Notice letter, even if you've just renewed your tax credits. Once you submit your Universal Credit claim, your current benefits will stop, and you won't be able to return to them.

If you have questions about claiming Universal Credit or need help getting online, you can call the number shown in your Migration Notice letter. Our Income Officers are also here to help you through this transition - you can find their email addresses and telephone numbers on the Loreburn website.

We'll continue to share updates about this transition as they become available. Remember, don't take any action until you receive your letter, but do start thinking about gathering any documents you might need for your claim.



Rent Payments During the Festive Period

If you usually pay rent over the phone, please be aware that you may need to make alternative arrangements during the holiday closure.

We understand that Christmas can be a particularly busy and expensive time of the year. However, it is essential to prioritise rent payments to avoid falling into arrears, which can create additional stress and financial challenges in the new year.

Lines to our Customer and Business Support Team and Income Officers will close at 17.00hrs on Monday, 23 December, and will re-open at 09.00hrs on Friday, 3 January, 2025.

To ensure your rent payments remain up to date, we encourage you to contact your Income Officer as soon as possible to discuss and arrange an alternative payment method. If you're having difficulties in making payments, your Income Officer will be able to advise and signpost you to any additional support that may be available - so please, do get in touch.

Knowing that your rent is taken care of over the holidays will help to ensure a worry free start to the new year.

Help with Energy Costs

We know that many households continue to feel the pressure of energy costs, and through the Emergency Energy Payment Assistance Programme, funded by Dumfries and Galloway Council, we're here to provide support when you need it most.



If meeting energy costs is a struggle, the funding can provide up to three separate payments of £49. This support is available to any of our tenants who receive at least one form of benefit payment.

Our friendly team is here to support you and you can get in touch in whatever way feels most comfortable:

- Call us on 01387 321 300
- Chat online via the website, using the webchat facility
- Send us an email to customerservice@loreburn.org.uk
- Speak directly with your Income Officer

Please don't hesitate to get in touch - we're here to help.

REGIONAL FOODBANKS

Dumfries and Galloway has a network of foodbanks who can help provide essential supplies such as food, toiletries and household items.

Anyone can face tough times, and each location has a team of dedicated volunteers ready to provide assistance - you don't need a referral from another agency.

In April, Loreburn staff donated items to three local foodbanks as part of Loreburn's 'making a difference' themed annual staff day.

If you'd like to donate to a foodbank near you, all foodbanks will gladly accept donations during their regular opening hours.

DUMFRIES:

- **Apex Scotland**
(77-79 Friars Vennel, Dumfries)
TUESDAY TO FRIDAY, 11AM - 2PM
☎ 01387 256310
- **River of Life Church**
(Dumfries Station, Lovers Walk)
EVERY DAY, 6:30PM - 7:30PM
☎ 01387 264646
✉ food@riveroflife.org.uk

- **Lochside Community Association**
(Rankine Avenue)
EVERY DAY FROM 11AM
☎ 01387 250 582
✉ Karen.Wylie@lochsideca.org

- **Summerhill Community Centre**
(Ballochmyle Terrace)
11AM TO 8PM
☎ 01387 247 344 or 0774 392 4609

ANNANDALE & ESKDALE:

- **Kate's Kitchen** (52 High Street, Annan)
TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS, 9AM - 5PM
☎ 01461 206444
✉ info@kateskitchen.org

KIRKCONNEL & KELLOHOLM:

- **Kirkconnel and Kelloholm Development Trust** (KKDT Office, Hillview)
EVERY DAY FROM 11AM
☎ 07340 684527 or 07464 282834
✉ chris@kkdt.org.uk

STEWARTRY AREA:

- **Dalbeattie Foodbank** (39 High Street)
MONDAY 10AM-2PM & 6PM-7PM
WEDNESDAY 10AM-2PM & 6PM-7PM
FRIDAY 2PM-5:30PM
☎ Emergency calls: 07444 332859
✉ donnamck.dci@gmail.com

- **Stepping Stones Community Larder**
(9 St Andrew St, Castle Douglas)
MONDAY AND FRIDAY 10AM-12NOON,
WEDNESDAY 11AM-1PM
☎ 07730 788335

WIGTOWNSHIRE:

- **Apex Scotland**
(2 Back Rampart, High Street, Stranraer)
MONDAY TO FRIDAY, 10AM TO 4PM
☎ 01776 700973
- **The Fed Up Community Cafe**
(12 Bridge Street, Stranraer)
MONDAY TO FRIDAY, 9:30AM - 2:30PM
☎ 01776 706159
✉ info@fedup.org.uk
- **Rhins Basics Bank**
Flexible hours
☎ 07715 677204
- **Machars Churches Basics Food Bank**
(5 Albert Street, Newton Stewart)
TUESDAY AND THURSDAY, 9AM - 12NOON
☎ 07874 934387
✉ coordinator@mcbfb@gmail.com

NEW ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES IN LOCHMABEN

At the end of August, we were delighted to welcome families to their new homes at our Woodlands development in Lochmaben.

Woodlands is a small development of six three-bedroom houses, which were designed to ensure high levels of energy efficiency and therefore low running costs for tenants, whilst also being environmentally sustainable.

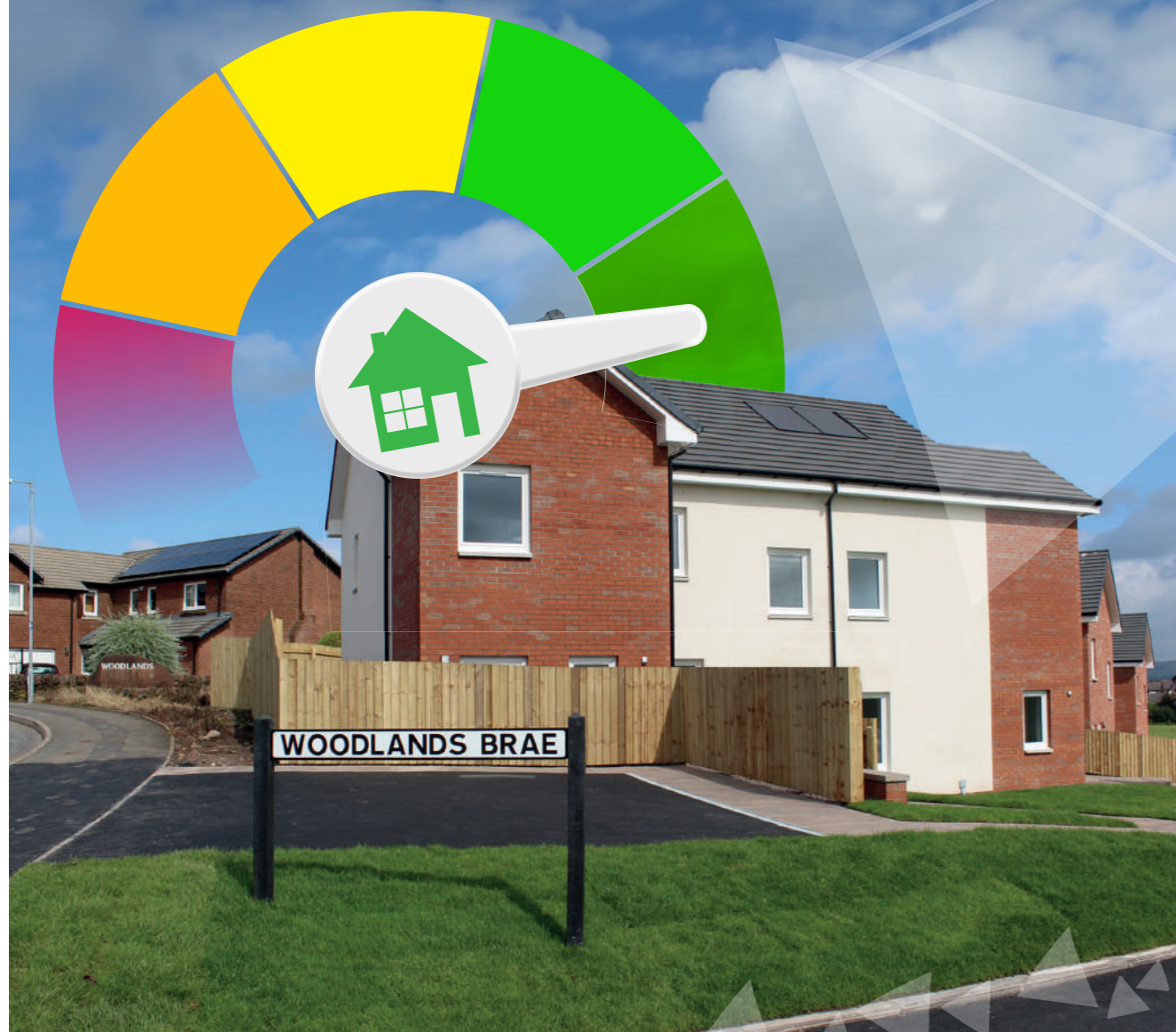
Each home is equipped with air-source heat pumps, energy-saving ventilation systems, and photovoltaic (PV) panels to maximise renewable energy use. Triple-glazed windows and high levels of insulation ensured the homes were built to the highest energy standards, reducing both environmental impact and energy costs for tenants.

One of the tenants, Samantha told us "I absolutely love our new property and am so thankful to have been offered one. The garden is amazing, and I love our kitchen—it really feels like home."

The development also attracted attention from the housing sector. In response, Kirsteen, our Chief Executive commented, "It's a pleasure to welcome our tenants to their new homes at Woodlands. We know affordability is a key priority, and these homes are designed to offer comfort and warmth with low running costs.

"By focusing on energy efficiency, we're able to support our tenants' immediate needs while also building for a sustainable future."

We wish all new tenants a long and happy future at Woodlands.



Tenant Scrutiny Group Projects

Our Tenant Scrutiny Group (TSG) has been playing an integral role in shaping how we approach upcoming home improvement projects, particularly the kitchen and bathroom replacement programmes. During a productive meeting held in August, the group reviewed key elements of the projects, including the design choices for kitchen units, worktops, and handles, all of which will be offered to tenants who are set to receive upgrades this financial year.

One of the exciting next steps for the TSG is conducting a survey among tenants who are due for kitchen upgrades. The survey aims to gather valuable feedback on how we deliver these projects, ensuring that we meet tenant expectations and improve the overall process. The group will then compile a paper with their recommendations, titled "How We Invest in Our Homes," which will be presented to our Board of Management. This paper could have a lasting impact on how we approach future upgrades, making sure they reflect tenant needs and preferences.

Looking ahead, the Tenant Scrutiny Group has also selected a range of other projects they would like to be involved in over the coming year. If you're interested in having a more active voice in how we deliver housing services, we encourage you to get involved!

Joining the Tenant Scrutiny Group or our E-Panel gives you the opportunity to have a direct influence on how we plan and implement services that affect you.

GET INVOLVED

If you'd like to make a difference and have your say, we'd love to hear from you. Whether you want to join the TSG or the E-Panel, both groups offer a chance to have a real impact on how we shape the future of housing services.

To find out more or to join, get in touch with us today!



Improvements to Call Handling and Online Contact Options

In September, we began to implement some changes to our telephone system to make it easier and more convenient for you to get in touch.

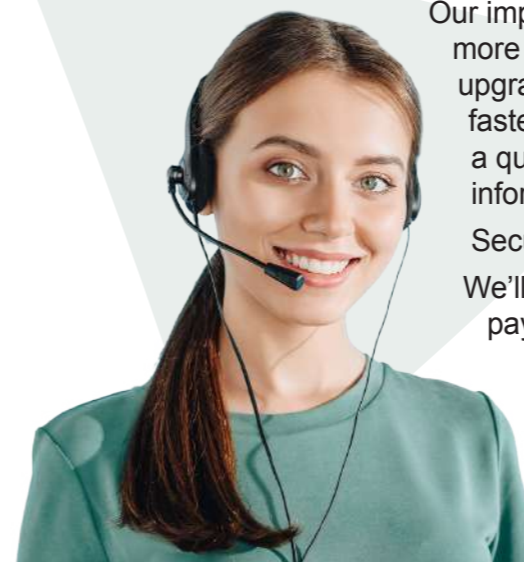
One of the main benefits of these changes is that you can now reach us on one number—01387 321300—for all enquiries, whether it's a repair, rent payment or other tenancy enquiry. This simplifies things and ensures you can easily get in touch using only the one number.

Our improved live chat system is also up and running, offering a smoother and more responsive online experience, if that's how you prefer to reach us. The upgrade means our customer support team can respond to your enquiries faster and can handle multiple requests seamlessly, whether you have a question about your account, need help with a repair, or want general information.

Secure Payments

We'll soon be adding a secure payment feature, allowing you to make payments over the phone right at the first point of contact, saving you time and assuring you of heightened levels of security.

If you have any questions or feedback, please don't hesitate to let us know.



Focus On... Loreburn's Management Committee

The Management Committee bring together their skills and experience to provide strategic leadership and oversight, ensuring Loreburn is well governed, accountable, and that our plans and objectives are aligned with our values and mission. These voluntary, unpaid members are selected for their skills, experience, and dedication to Loreburn's social purpose.

The Management Committee's Convener is Alan Sandey, who brings 20 years of social housing experience and expertise in procurement and asset management. Alan is supported by Vice Convener Jane Connechen, whose background in healthcare management gives her valuable insights into how good housing directly impacts health and wellbeing.

The broader Committee represents a diverse range of professional backgrounds, each contributing unique perspectives:



Peter Nelson, our Secretary, is a local Chartered Architect with extensive experience in housing and community projects.



Paul Buchanan shares his extensive experience in community-focused organisations and project management.



Stuart Turnbull is a Loreburn tenant, with over 30 years experience serving third sector organisations and as a member of our Tenant Scrutiny Group helps ensure tenants are represented at Management Committee.



Mark Wilkinson brings over 25 years of data and analytics expertise to help support the delivery of high impact business outcomes.



Lynsey Brydson heads digital programmes in the built environment sector, championing innovation in housing.



Russell Baird contributes vital financial expertise from his background in investment strategy and governance.



Cameron Kirkpatrick and Katie Hryschko bring valuable HR and employment expertise, helping us maintain our position as a good employer and an inclusive workplace.



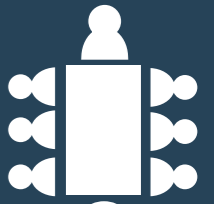
Neil Madden, a chartered accountant, brings financial oversight from his experience in renewable energy.

If you're interested in learning more about our Management Committee's work, you can find detailed information about our governance structure and minutes of Management Committee meetings in the Resource Library of the website.

If becoming a Management Committee member is not quite your thing, there are lots of other ways to get involved. One of those is to **Become a Shareholding Member of Loreburn.**

Read on to find out more about this simple, yet important commitment you can make as a tenant.

Loreburn Shareholding Membership



As a not-for-profit organisation and a registered Scottish charity, we are committed to supporting a strong and active membership base that is focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for tenants and their communities.

£1

Our ambition is to attract and retain a majority of tenant members to ensure our membership reflects the needs and aspirations of tenants throughout Dumfries and Galloway.

But we can only do this with your support.

Tenants are currently greatly underrepresented amongst our shareholders and we'd like tenants to have a far greater voice amongst our shareholding membership.

We are planning a membership drive in 2025 where we will be holding drop in events where you can come and chat to us about the benefits of joining. We will share more details in the New Year.

WHY BECOME A MEMBER?

Becoming a member demonstrates your commitment and connection to Loreburn, giving you the opportunity to actively support our mission to create great places to live in communities across the region. For just £1, you can join as a Shareholding Member and:

- Receive a Share Certificate and copy of the Association's Rules
- Review the Annual Report and Accounts to keep you informed
- Have voting rights at Loreburn's Annual General Meeting
- Be able to stand for election to our Management Committee
- Have the opportunity to directly influence key decisions that affect your community

HOW DO I APPLY?

Joining is very straightforward. You can either download and complete the short Membership Application from our website and email it to Tracy McNeil at tracym@loreburn.org.uk or, if you prefer to complete a paper application, just call us on 01387 321 300 and we'll send one to you.

Once your application and £1 payment are received, your application is presented to the Management Committee for approval at their next meeting. Upon approval, you'll receive your **Share Certificate** confirming your membership.

DON'T DELAY

complete your application and join as a Shareholding Member of Loreburn today.



Strategic Planning Update

In September, we held our bi-annual Strategic Planning Event, bringing together our Board of Management and senior staff to reflect on our current work, identify areas for improvement, and set our direction for the future. The theme for this year's event was "Back to Basics", with a focus on assessing where we are excelling and where we can do better.

During the event, each department delivered presentations that reviewed our achievements and highlighted challenges. These discussions were key to shaping an action plan that will guide our service delivery over the coming year. The aim is simple: to ensure we are creating GREAT places to live for all our tenants.

Key Priorities Identified

From the day's discussions, five main priorities emerged that will form the backbone of our action plan moving forward:

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Improving how we communicate within the organisation and with our tenants is essential to delivering better services and fostering stronger relationships.

BEST USE OF DATA

Making the most of the data we collect will help us make more informed decisions, improve our services, and better understand tenant needs.

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT PROCESSES (GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT)

We are committed to getting the basics right by streamlining and improving our internal processes, ensuring that we deliver efficient and reliable services to our tenants.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Embracing new technology will help us stay ahead and improve how we serve tenants. Whether it's offering better digital services or improving the tools we use behind the scenes, technology will be a key focus.

FOCUS ON FINANCIAL STRENGTH

Maintaining strong financial health is critical to ensuring we can continue investing in our homes, services, and people for years to come.

Looking Ahead

Loreburn holds two strategic planning days per year, which provide an important opportunity for our Management Committee and senior staff to assess progress, discuss future priorities, and align our work with the needs of our tenants. These events are incredibly valuable as they give us the chance to take stock of where we are, plan for the future, and ensure we are always striving to deliver the best possible services.

We are excited about the progress we're making and look forward to putting the action plan into motion. By focusing on these five key priorities, we are confident that we will continue to make our homes and communities GREAT places to live for all our tenants.



Loreburn
Housing Association

Registered Address: **7 Gifhorn House, Shakespeare Street, Dumfries, DG1 2JB**

Web: www.loreburn.org.uk

Email: customerservice@loreburn.org.uk

Tel: **01387 321300**

