

MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE!

Once again this year, we'll be sending our festive greetings to friends and colleagues by email.

We're donating the money saved on producing and posting corporate Christmas Cards to a local charity. We haven't decided which one/s yet, so if you have any suggestions, please let us know. Call us on 01563 528 816 or email info@atrium-homes.co.uk

Atrium Elves' Christmas Specials



The Atrium Elves will be out and about again this year, spreading Christmas cheer and goodwill to many of our tenants.

The Elves are here to help everyone, so if you need our assistance this

Christmas with any welfare matter (benefits, food, paying the bills, etc) please get in touch. Just phone, email or pop into the office. We'll be glad to do what we can to make your Christmas merrier.



Helping Hillhouse



Hillhouse is a social enterprise in Ayrshire which helps individuals and families who are struggling financially. Hillhouse offers these people practical support by supplying good quality second hand children's clothing, footwear and equipment throughout the year. They also organise a Christmas Present Project and last year gave 1,964 presents to 982 children, which included pyjamas and an age appropriate toy for each child.

Inspired by the Elves, our staff have been bringing in donations for Hillhouse to help with this year's Christmas Present Project and you can help too. Hillhouse would be glad to receive:

- toys suitable from birth to 12 years
- toiletries or make-up sets for older children
- pyjamas from newborn -16 years
- good quality Christmas paper, sellotape or Christmas cards.

If you'd like to donate something, you can either bring it into the office or give us a call and we'll try to pick it up from you when we're out and about. Please note all donations must be brand new and unwrapped.

Thanks for supporting this!

Sweet treats



Atrium is delighted to be giving selection boxes to all the Primary 1 - 3 pupils at James Hamilton Primary School and New Farm Loch Primary School during their school discos. When we did this last year a very special visitor turned up, so fingers crossed he might make an appearance again...

Christmas and New Year Holidays

Atrium's offices will be closed completely over the holiday period. We'll close on Monday 24th December at 12.30pm and re-open on Wednesday 3rd January 2019 at 9am.

If you have any emergency repairs during this period, please phone the office on 01563 528 816 and you'll be redirected to our emergency service.

Business Plan 2018-23

In our last newsletter in June, we set out our proposals for our Business Plan objectives for the next few years. Back then we said that we believe we'll achieve our vision of quality affordable homes, sustainable communities and life chances for people by focussing on four elements which are all related:

- ✓ Taking care of our Customers
- ✓ Taking care of our Housing
- ✓ Taking care of our Communities
- ✓ Taking care of the Business.

We also highlighted that our last Customer Satisfaction Survey in 2016 showed differences between how tenants in different areas perceive the quality of our houses: tenants living in newer houses were more satisfied; tenants living in older houses were less satisfied.

Dissatisfaction related mainly to the internal condition of the properties. In response, we developed Atrium's 'Fit for 21st Century Living' Standard. This covers a range of elements of a property - inside and out - and sets an Atrium Standard for what we see as 'quality affordable housing'. We aim to use this to help plan our future investment activity so that we bring all our housing to this Standard by 2025.

In August, we ran a consultation exercise for customers on the key income and expenditure elements of the Business Plan proposals to make sure we have it right.

The survey itself was prepared in conjunction with our Tenant Scrutiny Group over the summer - their comments influenced the questions we asked and the information we provided as part of the consultation exercise. Here's what you told us:





QUESTION	
Between now and 2025, we plan to upgrade around 770 older properties to the Fit for 21st Century Living Standard. At the same time, we aim to build around 70 new properties. What is your view of this plan?	
RESPONSE	
I agree with it	86.67%
I disagree with it	1.33%
I have no particular view	12%

QUESTION	
Do you agree with the content of our Fit for 21st Century Living Standard?	
RESPONSE	
YES	98.7%
NO	1.3%

QUESTION	
Have we correctly identified the work which we propose to do to your house type?	
RESPONSE	
YES	94.59%
NO	5.41%

Finally, we asked for your view of how we can finance the work. We need to borrow money to do it and how much we borrow is influenced by how much rental income we can generate through rent increases. Again, this is what you said:

QUESTION	
Our financial projections indicate that we can deliver our plan by 2025 and still restrict annual rent increases to no more than inflation (RPI) + 0.5%. Do you think that annual rent increases of this level are ok?	
RESPONSE	
YES	86.49%
NO	13.51%

QUESTION	
Would you be prepared to see annual rent increases of no more than inflation (RPI) +1% to get all the work done faster?	
RESPONSE	
YES	79.73%
NO	20.27%



Positive response

It's great to see such a positive response to our proposals from the tenants who responded to the consultation exercise. This level of endorsement allows us to proceed knowing we're on the right lines for both the investment plans and income generation.

We received a similar response from the Tenant Scrutiny Group when we discussed our overall proposals with them - in advance of the consultation exercise - and again when we shared the outcomes with them after it was completed.

"I am sure Atrium is well aware that the external environment has a significant effect on how people view their neighbourhood and on how it is viewed by other passing/visiting it. Items such as fencing really matter!"

What happens next?

We've already initiated the next phases of activity so we can begin to deliver the Fit for 21st Century Living Standard across all our housing stock.

First of all, we've taken advantage of some government funding which will allow us to install external wall insulation to some properties in Nether Robertland, Stewarton. This initial work will begin early in 2019.

We'll need a number of different contractors, for both external and internal works. We've already started trying to find suitable contractors capable of carrying out the bulk of the main activities, to the standard we require over several years. It's quite a complicated process and must be done in accordance with strict Scottish Government Guidelines, but we're making good progress so far.

We've also started to work out the programming schedule, covering what work could be done where and, of course, when. We're adopting some simple principles here which can be varied if needs be:

Priority:

We have to ensure we carry out work to the properties in order of need.

Location:

We need to split the works into logical geographical packages for the contractors.

Numbers:

With 765 properties and a 7 year programme, we'll be doing roughly 110 units a year (2 a week), completing in 2025. This changes to 153 units per year (3 a week) if we aim for a 2023 completion date.

Cost:

We need to make sure the rate at which properties are completed is affordable.

Ultimately, we'll need to discuss and agree all these points with selected contractors before we finalise the programme. But we're on schedule to do this by March 2019, and we're aiming to give every tenant an approximate date for when to expect work to be carried out to their property by April 2019.

One thing we're very keen to ensure is that we get access to every property, so that we - and you - have a detailed list of works being done to your home before a contractor starts. We call this a "march-in survey". This will be done in stages, in line with the identified programme. We'll give you plenty of notice of both the march-in and the works starting.

You said

"Think these are excellent plans and approve look of the area."

"I have lived here for 6 years. In this time I'm very satisfied with all the repairs and safety checks."

"Dampness should be a high priority before building new houses."

"Let tenants know of improvements asap so they don't waste money on decorating or improvements, etc."

"I think as a landlord you have a duty of care to your old properties and tenants. The year 2025 is far too long for the tenants to wait for a kitchen that went out of date (life span) in 2017 and a new replacement bathroom for the original that's from the dark ages."