Loreburn Living



GREAT new homes in Castle Douglas



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Creating GIREAT places to live



Welcome to our Winter 2023 edition of Loreburn Living. We are delighted to share with you some of the highlights from this year and the incredible work from our teams and the wider community.

I hope you and your families are keeping well and are looking forward to the upcoming festive season.

As we face another challenging winter with high energy costs and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, the importance of a sense of community and the value of highquality services have been really brought home.

This time of year is expected to be full of joy, laughter, and reflection. Nevertheless, for some, it can be a difficult time. Whatever the reasons, I would like to extend an open invitation for you to reach out to us, we will try to help in any way that we can. If we can't then there are also many other organisations across Dumfries and Galloway offering assistance and support this winter, and we have signposted these within our newsletter.

Since joining Loreburn in June of this year, I have been thoroughly impressed by the commitment of our staff to create thriving communities where people want to live. I am excited to continue to work alongside such passionate individuals who are dedicated to making a positive impact and improving the lives of our communities

However, I am aware of the challenges and economic uncertainty that face both our tenants and the housing sector as a whole. As a result, you may have seen that we have made the difficult decision to temporarily pause our new-build development plans. While we recognise the importance of these projects, we believe that this decision will allow us to maintain our focus on investing in our existing homes, with the focus on making them more energy efficient.

Creating great places to live requires a shared vision where open communication and collaboration are essential, which is why I would like to thank you in advance for your participation in our tenant satisfaction survey. Your feedback is valuable

to us and will help us identify areas for improvement and shape our future approach.

We have begun to work on our budgets for the next financial year, starting in April 2024, and a key part of this is consulting you on our proposed rent levels.

As your landlord, it's really important to us that we're giving you the services and support you need and expect. We understand that the costof-living is causing real issues for lots of people, and an increase in rent alongside everything else is a worry.

Last year we advised we were experiencing increased costs in relation to materials, energy suppliers and more - unfortunately, this year is no different. We are striving to mitigate the impact this has on our services and investments, while keeping in mind the costof-living crisis. The rent consultation is your opportunity to give us your views, so please make sure that you respond by Monday 15 January 2024 to ensure that your preferences are taken into account.

In September we hosted our first in-person Annual General Meeting since 2019. It was a great opportunity to connect, network, and share insights with each other.

While there was a strong focus on the current difficult operating environment and the pressures on our budgets. We were also able to celebrate our achievements from the past year these range from successfully securing grants enabling us to provide financial support to tenants to seeing three new build developments, providing 44 new homes through to completion. Although we have temporarily paused our ambitions for our new build programme, we are enthusiastic about proposed projects to imtpove the energy efficiency of our existing homes. Despite the challenges we all face I'm optimistic about what the new year holds for Loreburn.

I hope you find this issue of Loreburn Living informative and enjoyable, and I wish you all the very best for a wonderful Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.



Kirsteen

Kirsteen McGinn, CEO

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Blooming Loreburn

From floral features to bright blooms, we were blown away by some of this year's Blooming Loreburn entries. We want to thank everyone who took part in our competition and to congratulate you all for your efforts.

This year we introduced a brand new 'Special Recognition' category, which allowed housing teams to nominate their tenants and acknowledge their hard work and dedication.

The entries were judged by our CEO, Kirsteen, and winners were announced in September. A GREAT big congratulations to...

ELIZABETH LAW

DAVE TEALE

Whole garden winner

Vegetable patch winner

LILY NAPIER

DOUGLAS GARDENS

Young gardener winner

Best development

BALLIOL COURT, who won our special recognition category for their community garden.

Year on year we're amazed by the unbeLEAFable entries we receive, and we can't thank you enough. Keep those green thumbs thriving, we're already looking ahead to Blooming Loreburn 2024!







Festive fun at Nithsdale Mills and J M Barrie House

'Tis the season to be jolly, so we rolled up our sleeves and got our craft on!

We recently hosted two festive crafting sessions for Later Living tenants in Dumfries. We had a blast making a Christmas tree garland and origami stars, all while sipping on a warm cup of tea and munching on a biscuit (or two).

We decked out the communal areas with our creations, transforming it into a winter wonderland just in time for Christmas!



A GREAT Big Thank You!

Towards the end of every year, we extend a 'GREAT Big Thank You' to Loreburn tenants who have gone the extra mile for their neighbours and the local community.

This year, we heard all about Robert Kerr's exceptional efforts in supporting his neighbours at Nithsdale Mills in Dumfries.

Linda Dickie, one of our Later Living Development Managers, said: "Robert's selfless acts have made a difference to so many of his neighbours.

"From running errands to helping with technical problems, his generosity in assisting others has not gone unnoticed.

"I nominated Robert to receive a 'GREAT Big Thank You' to show him that what he does in and around the development is truly appreciated."

Linda also told us all about Robert's fantastic contributions to the Dumfries community, including his involvement in maintaining the train station with Dumfries Adopters Railway Gardeners.

Robert is always keen to get involved with what goes on at Loreburn. Earlier this year, he represented us at a TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) Conference and he's happy to regularly volunteer his time to take part in various tenant groups.

Our CEO Kirsteen wrote a letter of thanks to Robert, commending his community spirit, and Linda surprised him at his home with a floral gift basket alongside a £50 supermarket voucher. We can't wait to see what Robert gets up to in the new year!





Our main telephone line (01387 321 300) will close at 5pm on Thursday 21 December 2023 and will reopen at 9am on Wednesday 3rd January 2024. Our social media accounts and emails will not be monitored between these times.

Our In-house repairs team will be available in 01387 321 400 as follows:

Friday 22nd Dec	8am - 5pm
Monday 25th Dec	Closed
Tuesday 26th Dec	Closed
Wednesday 27th Dec	8am - 5pm
Thursday 28th Dec	8am - 5pm
Friday 29th Dec	8am - 5pm
Monday 1st Jan	Closed
Tuesday 2nd Jan	Closed

Please note that between Friday 22nd December and Tuesday 2nd January our Repairs Team will be restricting their work to emergencies only.

Emergency repairs can still be reported at any time by calling

01387 321 400

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New homes

SCOTT'S WAY, CASTLE DOUGLAS

The end of November marked the completion of our long-anticipated Later Living accommodation in Castle Douglas: Scott's Way.

The development has been named in memory of our friend and colleague, Scott Anderson, who sadly passed away two years ago.

His expertise and input during the site acquisition, design, and tender phases were invaluable and directly contributed to the exceptional Later Living facilities we have today. We hope that Scott's Way serves as a fitting tribute to Scott and his 25-year career with Loreburn.



On 13 November, we opened the doors to our Scott's Way development to give an opportunity to new and prospective tenants to view the accommodation on offer.

Especially for those aged 55 and over, Scott's Way comprises of 23 brand new one and two-bedroom flats. Equipped with modern facilities such as walk-in showers, fitted kitchens, central heating, and communal spaces, these fully accessible homes provide a comfortable and spacious living environment.

Tenants benefit from ample parking and the convenience of a communal courtyard with drying facilities and landscaped gardens. A regular staff presence, alongside CCTV in communal areas, ensures a safe and secure setting. For additional peace of mind, emergency call facilities are available to all residents via built-in assistive technology.

The event was a splendid success! We were thrilled to see so many people from the community keen to take a look around the development. As the build was nearing completion, we couldn't wait to see our first tenants move in and make Scott's Way their own.





Happy new home!

With Christmas fast approaching, we were thrilled to begin to welcome tenants to their new homes at the start of December.

Our dedicated Development and Housing Teams have worked incredibly hard to ensure that everything was in place for their move-in.

We're delighted to see the community begin to come to life and we hope that

Scott's Way will be not just a great place to live, but a place where our tenants can build lasting friendships and feel truly at home.







STATION ROAD, DALBEATTIE



"The homes are so much more efficient, and it'll really help to lower my energy bills which is another huge relief. I think all future builds should be of this

in the air and it's so quiet"

standard"

LONGMEADOW, ANNAN

Based on the site of Longmeadow House in Annan, these properties have been designed with energy-efficiency in mind.

The conversion and restoration of the Category C listed Longmeadow House provides two two-storey general needs homes and an amenity bungalow. A further

two amenity bungalows, which are Passivhaus Certified, were also completed and handed over to tenants.



Tenants are now enjoying bright new energyefficient homes in a £3.8 million project that has completely transformed and regenerated a derelict brownfield site.

Our Station Road development consists of a mixture of general needs and amenity properties, all designed and constructed to Passivhaus standards.

Resident Alan said: "Having grown up in this area, I've loved the opportunity to come back to my roots after so many years.

"This is so much more than just a home to me. I lost my job a few years ago and with that I lost my house too.

"I was in desperate need of a fresh start, and I was over the moon to be offered one of these new homes. This is the beginning of a brand-new chapter, and I can already notice a difference in my wellbeing.

"I really do see myself retiring here. I've found somewhere that I belong."

The airtight homes contain high levels of insulation and use mechanical heat recovery ventilation to help remove condensation and moisture, while providing a regulated temperature throughout the property.

Each new home has been carefully designed and built to meet the highest standards of comfort, energy-efficiency and accessibility, ensuring a positive living experience for all.





Construction resumes at The Garrick, Stranraer

As you may be aware, building work at The Garrick was suspended in April due to the liquidation of the main contractor, Stewart & Shields. Since then, we've shared that Ashleigh (Scotland) Limited has taken over the contract, and the development is now on track to be completed by summer 2024.

Despite the challenges we've faced, we're delighted to report that progress towards completion is well underway. The Garrick is a highly anticipated project that will see the former hospital site transformed into a modern, vibrant community – one that is sure to become a hub of activity for the local area.

We're excited to keep everyone updated on our progress as we move forward, and we can't wait to welcome tenants and guests to this dynamic new space next year.

Tenant satisfaction survey

Tenant Satisfaction Surveys are an essential tool we use to help us shape our services, improve our ways of working and enhance your overall experience of Loreburn.

Every three years we are required by the Scottish Housing Regulator to survey all tenants to find out your opinions on the services you receive and how you feel about your home, its rent level and our input into the management of your neighbourhood.

We're committed to providing the best service possible to our tenants, and your input is crucial in helping us achieve that.

In October, we began by sending out email surveys to all tenants with an email address. We followed this by sending out postal surveys from mid-November, and then by conducting a telephone survey which will continue into January.

We appreciate everyone who has taken the time to share their views, and will look to share the results of our survey in Spring 2024.



Community focus: Stepping Stones Community Larder and Foodbank



Over the last few months, our Central Housing Team have been making regular visits to Stepping Stones in Castle Douglas - a community larder and foodbank led by a group of passionate volunteers who are dedicated to supporting locals in need.

Rebecca McColm, Neighbourhood Officer, said: "On our first visit we were completely blown away by this lovely community shop. The atmosphere is infectious - it's a real social hub.

"We loved hearing about all of the collaborative work Leanne and her team are doing, and the exciting ideas they have for expanding the service."

As a part of Challenge Poverty Week in October, Loreburn staff came together and collectively raised £150 for Stepping Stones, which was put towards the purchase of essential white goods such as fridges and freezers.

Rebecca continued: "Places like this really do make Castle Douglas such a great place to live. We always enjoy volunteering there and are kept busy by helping to sort the generous donations from local residents and businesses.

Community Larder membership is available to all, no matter your circumstances, for as little as £1 per year. Members can access up to ten items per week for £3, or 20 items per week for £6, and a free foodbank service is also available.

Stepping Stones is located at 9 St Andrews Street, DG7 1DE, and it's open Monday & Friday 10am-12pm and Wednesday 11am -1pm.

"We're proud to be able to support initiatives like Stepping Stones, and we can't wait to see what the future has in store for them."



Introducing our Sustaining Communities Officers

Earlier this year we introduced two new roles to enhance the support that can be offered to tenants.

As Sustaining Communities Officers, Louise and Aileen will work alongside tenants to give help with any issues and enable them to live well in their tenancy.

Working closely with the wider community team, they can provide support with a range of things such as health matters, money and budgeting, and can point tenants in the right direction of other services that may be useful. We recognise that everyone's situations are unique, and our Officers are skilled in tailoring support to each tenant's specific needs.

You can find out more about the services that Louise and Aileen offer by reaching out to your Neighbourhood or Income Officer. Alternatively, contact them directly using the information below:



Aileen EMAIL: <u>AileenD@loreburn.org.uk</u> or call 07872126991 Louise EMAIL: <u>LouiseM@loreburn.org.uk</u> or call 07471035122

Supporting you through the cost-of-living crisis

The Social Housing Fuel Support Fund from the Scottish Government is designed to offer practical support to social housing tenants by helping to mitigate fuel poverty.

The grant has allowed us to provide households in need across the region with direct and practical financial assistance.

David Ewing, our Community Team Manager for the West, organised the initial bid and expressed his satisfaction with the funding, stating: "With winter upon us and the possibility of steep fuel bills for many people, the grant is welcome news."

"The grant will supplement our tenant support, contributing towards financial stability by helping some of our tenants manage and reduce their energy expenses."

This award follows our recent successful bid of £6,700, which will be used to support our Later Living tenants during the colder months.

The funds have helped to launch our 'Lunch with Loreburn' initiative, which provides complimentary hot meals and activities to tenants aged over 55. The grant has also gone towards the purchase of lap blankets, duvets, hot food flasks, and insulated curtains.



In October, we were awarded a grant of £37,512 to help you through the cost-of-living crisis.

Securing scheduling success with Oneserve

In October, we implemented a brand-new tenant-focussed scheduling software to help improve your overall experience of our repairs maintenance services.

Oneserve, a cloud-based housing maintenance platform, has been working with housing associations for over ten years to help deliver a positive repairs service that supports you from your initial report to the repair completion.

Since its launch just over a month ago, we've already noticed a significant improvement in the efficiency and productivity of our Scheduling team. We are looking forward to introducing many of Oneserve's great features in the near future, one of which is 'track my operative' which will allow us to provide you with more accurate arrival times and keep you better updated if there were to be any delays.

Oneserve is much more than just a basic repairs scheduling software. Soon we'll be launching a feature that will allow you to communicate directly with repairs operatives on the day of your repair, eliminating the need for you to call our repairs line, and an automated text message service that keeps you up-to-date with the status of your repair.



Advice and support with the cost of living

We understand that you might be worried about the cost of living and what it means for you and/or your family, that's why it's important to know what help and support is available to you.

Across the country prices are going up – we're all feeling it, particularly when it comes to food and energy. If you're feeling overwhelmed by household expenses, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We'll do our best to support you or put you in touch with organisations and partners who may be able to help.

In addition to the Loreburn team who are always here to listen, there are lots of other organisations you can turn to...











We share lots of resources and useful tips and tricks on how to save money over on our Facebook page so if you haven't already given us a follow, head on over.

We'll do all we can to help but on occasion, you might benefit from the expert knowledge and advice of others.

On our website, you'll find a list of agencies that can provide advice, support and other practical help.



Annual rent consultation 2024/25

We're now starting to think about our budgets for the new financial year, and an important part of this is the legal requirement to carry out a tenant consultation on our proposed rent levels to be set from April 2024.

We must ensure that Loreburn remains financially stable, and this involves finding the right balance between keeping rents affordable while making sure that all aspects of the business are supported financially.



Why do you have a rent consultation?

We conduct these consultations not only because we are legally obligated to do so, but also to gather feedback from our tenants on affordability and value for money. We will always do our best to keep your rents as low as possible.

Do rents have to increase?

Keeping your rent as reasonable as possible is important to us but, like all households and businesses, we are facing significant financial pressures along with ongoing increases in costs.

The cost-of-living crisis makes it especially important that our consultation with you strikes the right balance between rent affordability and the need to maintain our services and investment in your homes.

The consultation will close on Monday 15th January 2024. Please take the time to read through the options and provide your feedback, your input can help shape our future investment strategy and ensure that the needs of all tenants are met. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us directly.

Investment priorities for the future

Back in September, we announced the difficult decision to pause plans for the building of new homes for the foreseeable future.

By delaying our development plans, we are now able to shift our focus towards improving our current housing stock and ensuring that you benefit from a comfortable, energy-efficient home. Our annual programme is based on a full stock condition survey – this helps us decide which major improvement works are a priority and makes sure that the oldest elements are improved first.

We understand the importance of improving your home's energy efficiency, which is why we are making plans that involve upgrading multiple components instead of fixing individual ones (a practice you may already know or come to hear being called 'retrofit') This approach may require a longer investment period, but it guarantees that you receive the maximum benefits from the upgrades and will ultimately save you money on your energy bills.

In doing so, we can also ensure that we continue to meet national standards, such as the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing.



12 days of Christmas safety tips

1

CHRISTMAS TREES

Keep trees away from heat sources and water real ones daily. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Check your lights and cables for damage before use and remember to unplug them every night.

3 EXTENSION CABLES

Don't overload cables and keep them next to a wall to avoid trips

4 CANDLES

Battery operated candles are a much safer alternative to real ones, especially around young children and pets 5

COOKING

Keep an eye on your cooking and don't leave it unattended

6

FOOD

Make sure you store and cook food to the correct temperatures. Clean all surfaces and utensils to avoid cross contamination

DECORATIONS

Do not attach decorations to lights or heaters, and keep them away from candles 8

SMOKE DETECTORS

Check they're working by testing them weekly

9

SECURITY

Help to keep your home secure over the festive period by making sure your valuables aren't on show

10

WASTE

Put your Christmas waste in the bin or take it to your local recycling centre. You should never leave it in communal areas

11

ICE & SNOW

During the colder weather, watch out for icy patches

12

TRAVELLING

Plan your journey and check the weather forecast before setting off

Introducing our new choice based lettings website

You may have noticed that our Loreburn Lettings website is looking a little different...

We understand that finding a new home can be stressful, and we want to make the process as smooth and stress-free as possible. That's why we've revamped our Lettings website to create a more user-friendly experience for you.

Our new website design features a simplified layout that allows for easier navigation and quicker access to the information you need. We've also made it easier for you to submit your application and find your perfect home with ease.

We're always looking for ways to improve, so if you have any feedback on our new website we'd love to hear it! Please don't hesitate to get in touch via any of the usual ways.

Damp, mould and condensation

Any home can be affected by damp and mould.

We take any reports of damp and mould very seriously and if your home is affected, we're here to help. Our top priority is ensuring your home is a safe and comfortable place to live.

Damp in your home can be caused by various factors. Some examples include:



Rising damp

Water can travel upwards from the ground through masonry, reaching up to a meter in height.



Penetrating damp

When water enters a building from outside, it is known as penetrating damp. This can be caused by issues like leaking downpipes.



Defective plumbing

Leaking pipes, wastes, or overflows can contribute to dampness. These defects often feel damp to the touch and remain wet regardless of weather conditions.



Condensation damp

This type typically occurs when a property lacks the necessary insulation, ventilation, and heating to deal with normal levels of water vapor.

Left untreated, damp and mould can cause problems with the structure of your home and have a negative effect on your health. If you notice signs of damp and mould, it's important that you report it to us as soon as possible so we can investigate further.

We'll conduct a thorough survey to identify any underlying issues and work with you to decide the best course of action. We'll also help you dry out your home and repair any damages that may have occurred.

There are several ways you can let us know about damp or mould in your home:

- Monday Friday, 9.00 17.00, us the live chat feature on our website to connect with a
 member of our team. Simply click on the orange icon on the bottom right of your screen to
 get started.
- Fill in our online contact form
- Call our repairs line on 01387 321 400
- Email repairs@loreburn.org.uk

Spread the good news

We're a vibrant community and there's always lots happening in and around our developments.

If you've got something you're bursting to share, we'd love to hear your stories and see your photos. From birthdays and anniversaries to special events and hobbies, your news is too good to keep to yourself.

Email Kayleigh Osborne, Communications Officer, to let us know about the GREAT things going on in your neighbourhood: customerservice@loreburn.org.uk

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Get in touch

Contact your Neighbourhood or Income Officer directly for any tenancy or rent related matters. There's no need to go through our main contact number, meaning quick and easy access to the right person.

TITLE	NAME	TEXT	EMAIL
Neighbourhood Officer	Rachel Kennedy	07771 048218	RachelK@loreburn.org.uk
Neighbourhood Officer	Sarah Thomson	07880 035301	Saraht@loreburn.org.uk
Neighbourhood Officer	Jadie Wedge	07568 427186	jadiew@loreburn.org.uk
Income Officer	Laura Lupton	07936 349214	<u>LauraL@loreburn.org.uk</u>
Income Officer	Kerry Graham (DG10 & DG11)	07469 278195	kerryg@loreburn.org.uk

Our Central Community Team cover areas DG2, DG3, DG4, DG5, DG6 & DG7

TITLE	NAME	TEXT	EMAIL
Neighbourhood Officer	Jade Dykes	07872 127012	JadeD@loreburn.org.uk
Neighbourhood Officer	Tamara Marshall	07872 127015	TamaraM@loreburn.org.uk
Neighbourhood Officer	Rebecca McColm	07872 127015	RebeccaM@loreburn.org.uk
Neighbourhood Officer	Lauren Carmichael	07593 451803	LaurenC@loreburn.org.uk
Income Officer	Deborah Thomson	07703 818728	DeborahT@loreburn.org.uk
Income Officer	Kerry Graham	07469 278195	KerryG@loreburn.org.uk

Our West Community Team cover areas DG8 and DG9

TITLE	NAME	TEXT	EMAIL
Neighbourhood Officer	Rachael McCrory	07593 530326	RachaelM@loreburn.org.uk
Neighbourhood Officer	Paul Challis	07872 127020	PaulC@loreburn.org.uk
Income Officer	lan McGeoch	07818 591425	lanM@loreburn.org.uk

General Enquiries: 01387 321300

Repairs Line: 01387 321400

Emergency Out of Hours Line: **01387 321400**

Web: www.loreburn.org.uk

Email: customerservice@loreburn.org.uk

(O) @loreburnhousing @loreburnhousing @loreburnhousing

