

Westfield Craic

Christmas 2021

Welcome to our latest newsletter. We hope you find it useful and informative.

We welcome feedback on any of the content as well as any suggestions for future content.

Covid Update

Office Update

The office remains closed to the public. We are planning to re-open the reception in January on a part time basis. We are creating a new entrance to the reception area and will re-open once this work is complete (this work was originally scheduled for November but is now unlikely to take place until mid-late December).

We will confirm the opening date and new opening times once these have been agreed. Please check the website.

All staff are now based in the office for part of the working week (a level of remote working is continuing). Staff are also conducting many contacts with tenants and others in person, but in line with agreed precautions (e.g., social distancing, hygiene measures, ventilation of rooms etc.).

We have received some feedback that during Covid it has been more difficult contacting us. We have recently increased our frontline staffing, and this together with more staff working from the office should have improved ease of contact. However, if you have had problems contacting us, we would welcome further feedback with a view to making any necessary improvements.

Emergency Repairs

During the festive closure we will be operating an Emergency only Repairs Service.

If you have an **EMERGENCY REPAIR**, please ring our Out of Hours Service provider Orbis on **0151 343 2762** – please only ring this number if you have a genuine emergency and we ask that you do not ring contractors directly.

For **GAS EMERGENCIES** ring SURE GAS on **0800 031 6578**.

For general, non emergency repairs, you can email us on repairs@westfieldha.org.uk You can log into your tenants portal or leave a voice mail on our office number 01900 602906.

To register on your portal please go to our Website www.westfieldha.org.uk and register as a tenant on the Login/register tab at the top of the home page. All you need to access this service is your tenancy reference number. This can be found on your rent statement or obtained by calling the office 01900 602906 (option 3).

Please note that reported non emergency repairs will be actioned on our return to the Offices on 4th January 2022.

Christmas Office closure

The office and maintenance department will close on

Thursday 23rd December 2021

from 5pm and will re-open on

Tuesday 4th January 2022 at 9.00am.

Covid Update

Repairs and Maintenance

Although our regular monthly repairs surveys highlight high satisfaction with repairs, we received some feedback from the Community Survey carried out in May of some dissatisfaction, mainly because of delays with repairs. During periods of lockdown the ordering of many repairs (non-emergency responsive repairs and planned maintenance repairs) was delayed due to Covid and we are still in the process of catching up on these. Catch up has been slower than anticipated because of problems with the supply of materials and also due to contractor capacity. Of 200 catch up repairs just over 40 remain outstanding. We hope to have these all completed over the next two months.

The delays experienced have included the fitting of new electric fires to replace gas fires found to be in poor condition. Again, this has been slower than anticipated because of problems with the supply of new fires and with the engagement of engineers to carry out the work. 54 fires are still to be fitted and we are aiming to complete these by mid January. If you are waiting for a fire to be fitted, please respond to any requests from us for an access time for the work, or for your choice of fire (we are continuing to chase a small number of tenants who haven't provided a choice).

We apologise for any delays you may have experienced. We are working with our contractors to improve completion times and keep delays to a minimum.

Operating the repairs service safely

Although restrictions have been eased all contractors are continuing to work in line with industry and Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance and advice. This includes the wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), maintaining required distances, washing/sanitising of hands and checking occupants circumstances prior to entering to ensure no Covid related illness, potential illness or self-isolation.

If a contractor calls at your home, please:

- * Open doors and make a clear path to the area where the contractor will be working
- * Open doors and windows to the room(s) being worked in
- * Disinfect the area around where the contractor is working
- * Wear a face mask
- * Stay at least 2 meters away, preferably in a different room
- * Do not provide drinks or food

Please let the contractor know if you are ill with Covid 19, have symptoms of the virus or are self-isolating. In this instance we will normally only enter your home to fix risk to life emergencies.

Gas servicing

It is very important that we continue to carry out the annual checks and servicing of gas heating systems and appliances. Please allow access so that the check and servicing can be completed, and we can confirm the safety of these appliances. Our contractors are taking all necessary precautions to ensure that they do not put you, or themselves, at risk.

Other health and safety checks

Electrical safety checks and fire safety checks in communal areas are continuing as normal. As per gas servicing's please allow access for these checks in order that systems can be confirmed as safe.

Further information

For any further information about Covid and the current service please contact us.

Please follow all government advice relating to coronavirus. Following this advice is critical to minimising the risk and resolving the issue as quickly as possible. If you need more information on this advice, or any other matters relating to Covid please contact us.

Covid Update

Your Welfare

This continues to be a difficult time which is having a serious impact on many people. If you are struggling with any aspect of managing the current situation and need further help or assistance, please speak to us.

There is a vast range of support available and depending on your issue we will either be able to help you directly, or to put you in touch with one of the many support groups available locally. If you would prefer to contact a support group directly useful contact numbers include:

Financial Help

Allerdale Citizens Advice: www.citizensadvice.org.uk
or call 01900 604735.

West Cumbria Community Money Advice:
www.wccma.co.uk

Community Food Projects

Moorclose Community Centre Needham Drive,
Workington, CA14 3SE

Contact: Facebook 'Moorclose Community Centre'
Help with Food

The North Lakes Foodbank can be contacted on
07502311452 and operates across Allerdale at the
following locations and times:

Maryport - St Mary's Church, Netherhall Corner,
CA15 6LL - Tues/Thurs 12pm - 2pm and
Fri 4pm - 6pm.

Cockermouth - Lorton Street Methodist Church,
CA13 9RH - Tues/Wed/Thurs 10am- 12pm

Workington - Bridge Centre, Central Square, CA14
3BG - Mon/Wed/Fri 12pm - 2pm

Wigton - Cornerstone Methodist Church, 50 High
Street, CA7 9PG - Tues/Fri 10am- 12pm

**We will be resuming check in calls with tenants
where we think that some problems could be
experienced.**

Rent Payments

Rent payments still need to be made as normal and we continue to monitor rent accounts and follow up where rent is owed.

We understand that because of current circumstances meeting your rent obligations in full may be difficult. If your financial situation has become more difficult, please speak to us as soon as possible. We can provide advice and assistance e.g., with claiming universal credit or other benefits, or with other financial support that you may be able to get. We can put revised rent payment arrangements in place where this is needed.

To discuss a rent payment issue please call:
01900 602906 option 2.

Rent payments can be made as follows:

On our website www.westfieldha.org.uk

Using the tenant portal

By phone – 01900 602906 option 2

By standing order

By direct debit

When the office re-opens in the new year you will be able to make payments, but by card only. We no longer take cash payments.

Footsteps Nursery

The nursery is open and operating near to capacity. To run as safely as possible, the number of children able to attend is very slightly reduced and classrooms are continuing to operate on a bubble basis. Child drop offs and collections continue to take place at the external entrances.

To contact the nursery please call: 01900
872011.

**Please remember If you are a Westfield
tenant you could be eligible for a 50%
reduction in the cost of your childcare.**

MERRY Christmas

A Christmas Message from Henry Barker, Board Chair

This is my first Christmas message, since becoming chair in October. I would like to thank Kevin Foley our previous chair for his contribution over the last two years (Kevin stepped down as chair because of work commitments but is continuing as a Board member)

This past year has continued to be difficult with the ongoing challenges presented by Covid. This has included restricted face to face working ; this said staff continue to amaze me with the work they do in such difficult circumstances. We have worked to provide the best service we can, but acknowledge some issues for example with delayed repair work and some reported difficulties with contacting us. We are working hard to improve this and deliver the best service possible.

Our Board has also changed recently, some members have left and new members have joined ; it's always sad to see people leaving; I would like to say a thank you to them for their valuable service and Involvement.

There are interesting times ahead. Our plans to develop more new homes will hopefully commence in early 2022, We will also be working to increase your involvement and to get more input from you on what we do.

Christmas is nearly here,. It will continue to be a strange year due to the COVID situation, but on behalf of all of us at Westfield I would like to wish you and your families a very merry Christmas and prosperous new year.

Henry Barker

Development Update

Plans for new bungalows

As many of you will know from the recent newsletter setting out



our development plans for the Westfield estate, we are planning to build a number of two-bedroom bungalows to meet the need for older persons homes, using sites that we own on the estate, including existing garage sites.

We hope to start building work in early 2022 and for the first bungalows (13 in total) to be complete and available for letting by the end of 2022. A second phase of a further 17 bungalows is planned to start in late 2022. We are currently seeking planning permission. Plans are available on request from our office.

The properties will be for rent to applicants over 55 and/or residents with medical and physical needs. Providing these homes will enable us to move tenants living in under-occupied three and four-bedroom homes into smaller properties, which will free up the larger houses for families.

Thinking of selling your home?

In addition to our new build scheme we continue to buy back properties on the estate. If you are thinking of selling your home, then please contact Diane Gorge on 01900 602906.



Customer Survey - Prizes to be won!!

A company called Acuity are currently carrying out a survey for us and you should have received a form in the post to complete and return to Acuity

We are doing this survey to update and improve the information that we hold for all tenants, including contact details. The information will help us to deliver our services in a way that best suits you and meets your needs. The survey also includes some questions on our housing services, how satisfied you are with the service you get from us, and where you think we could improve. We would be very grateful if you could take the time to complete the survey.

All tenants who complete the survey will be entered into a prize draw with prizes as follows:

1st Prize: A high Street voucher of your choice- £250

2nd and 3rd prizes: A High St voucher of your choice- £100

4th and 5th prizes: A High St voucher of your choice- £50

The survey is confidential – . What you tell Acuity will be strictly confidential.

If you have any questions or would like any help completing the survey, please e-mail acuity@arap.co.uk or call 01273 287114.

Thankyou and good luck



Clean up event

In September we worked in partnership with Allerdale Borough Council and other agencies to take part in Keep Britain Tidy's national Big Spring Clean, helping to tackle the blight of fly tipping and littering in the area.

This was a very successful event and we managed to dispose of 3 large skips full of bulky items and household rubbish that tenants were unable to remove themselves.

Having received lots of positive feedback from tenants who attended the day, we have decided to hold an annual clean up event. However, we would like to make this into more of an annual fun day and get more tenants and children involved. Some suggestions were:

- Have street games for children
- Have a cake stall
- Have some sports games for children
- Garden competitions

If you have any suggestions for things you would like us to consider for the day please contact



Getting involved

Providing the right homes and services requires us to understand what is needed and wanted. Building involvements enables us to better understand yours and others needs and aspirations and should mean better services.

Our community is at the heart of everything we do therefore, your experiences and the benefit you get from our services are all very important.

To help and encourage people to get involved we are committed to providing a range of different opportunities. Some of these are listed below. Further details are given in at our Customer Engagement Strategy which can be viewed on our website.

Ways to be involved

There are a range of ways you can choose to get involved.

Some options take just a few minutes of your time, and some require more regular commitment.

These ways include:

- Being a Board member
- Joining our new Customer Panel (further details In the new year)
- Being part of a new 'Digital Engagement Group' being set up shortly. Via the group tenants will be asked to provide occasional electronic feedback on our services ' performance and policies e.g. via email.
- Attending local meetings to discuss local issues
- Taking part in surveys
- Taking part in area walkabouts

We welcome any further ideas you may have for being involved . If you think you can give us some of your time please get in touch on 01900602906

Enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk

Board Members Wanted

We currently have vacancies for tenant board members so if you feel you can make a real difference to your local community and the services they receive please get in touch.

Why being involved is important

We are keen to hear your views and suggestions and tenant engagement can bring amazing benefits including:

- Delivery of better services
- Making sure we use our resources in the best ways
- Helping resolve local issues
- Being involved in decisions affecting your home and community
- Helping to set priorities for services
- Your personal development, especially if you would like to become a member of the Board
- Increased satisfaction and better communication between you and us



Residents meeting

We have held three residents meetings in 2021.

1st meeting was on Tuesday 5th October 2021

2nd meeting was on Tuesday 2nd November 2021.

3rd meeting was on Wednesday 1st December 2021

As a result of these meetings Westfield Housing Association and residents identified there was a need for a playpark on the estate, more bins were needed around the estate and there is an on going parking issue on the estate.

To take these issues forward we needed to complete a consultation for the play park and a proposed location. 450 consultation papers were sent out on 8th/ 9th November 2021 with a closing date 22nd November 2021.

49 papers were returned in total, 42 of these said they were in favor of having a play park in the proposed location, 4 were not in favor sighting vandalism as a concern and 3 had no preference.

Following this consultation an application has been made to Workington Town Council for funding and Westfield Housing have committed to contributing towards the cost.

Taking the parking issue forward the residents are now in the process of forming a sub group to preparing a proposal to present to the board in February 2022 about turning open frontages into driveways.

We have purchased an additional 5 bins, situated them around the estate and ABC have agreed to empty them regularly.

The next resident meeting will be held early 2022. Please let us know if you would like to come along by contacting Susan 01900 602906.

Stock Condition Survey

In July 2021, we commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to carry out full property surveys to 30% of our properties – approximately 200. The purpose of the surveys was to gather information on the condition of our properties. This information will inform our planned maintenance programmes (kitchens, bathrooms, windows, doors, central heating systems, energy efficiency improvements etc).

Surveys were completed between August and November and all of the data collected is due back to us by the end of the year. Once received, we will use the data to review and revise our future Planned Maintenance Programmes – if necessary, we will also instruct any works that are needed more urgently.

When completed, we will share the programme with all of our tenants.

Any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us on 01900 602906 or email enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk

Fire Replacement update

Earlier in the year, a number of our gas fires were condemned due to their poor condition. We have worked closely with the contractors, Sure Maintenance to get the works completed.

Tenants sent in their choice of fire and although they were all ordered, there were huge delays due to COVID, factory closures and order backlogs. Although this was outside of Westfield's control, we would like to apologise and thank you all for your patience and understanding.

We do still have a handful of fires to be replaced and if this applies to you, please can you contact Sure Maintenance on **0800 0316578** to arrange a convenient time to have your replacement fire installed.

thank you!

Have a lovely Christmas but keep your family safe



Christmas competition

We would like to spread a little festive cheer this year, so thought we would run a competition for the best Christmas decorated house.

So if you have decorated your house for the festive season and wish to take part, please let us know. Your name and address by calling 01900 602906 or email: enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk.

We will have a walk or drive around the estate and rural areas week beginning 20th December 2021

The winner will received a high street voucher for
£50

Wishing you all a very merry Christmas from all at
Westfield Housing x

Home Fire Safety Visits

We are working in partnership with Cumbria Fire Service to ensure all our tenants are safe in their home.

We have agreed to refer new tenants or any existing tenants where we have identified any vulnerabilities or support needs for a home safety visit.

A Home Fire Safety Visit involves the local Fire Service coming to your home to check fire safety in more depth.

This is a free service .

If you , or someone you know, would benefit from a Home Fire Safety visit please let us know on 01900 602906

January 2022 rubbish collection

The Association will be carrying out its usual rubbish collection on the Westfield estate on 5th and 6th January 2022. Please leave anything for collection out at the front or inside the front wall.

If you have a real Christmas tree, chop it up and put it in your garden waste bin. Remember this collection is not for items that you usually put in your own wheelie bin.

Please do not leave white goods, plaster board, gypsum plaster, waste or any large bulky waste furniture as these will not be collected. To dispose of these goods please ring Allerdale Borough Council on 0303 123 1702 for further details.

**If you have
struggled to read
this newsletter
and would prefer
bigger print please
contact Julie on
(01900) 602906**