

It's SUMMER

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.

Time 2022

Office opening hours

In April we re-opened our office reception on a part time basis. We are currently open

Tuesdays 09:00hrs -12:00hrs & Wednesday 09.00hrs -17:00hrs

We intend extending the opening hours in July, our initial plan being to open most mornings and afternoons Monday to Friday but stay closed at lunchtimes. We welcome your views on the appropriate opening hours and will be discussing this with the Customer Panel.

Our staff are working mainly from the office however, there is still some home working following the pandemic.

All staff are contactable as normal. Services can also be accessed via the tenant portal.

You can also email us with general enquiries on

enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk

Repairs service update

Our repairs service is now working as normal although some delays with carrying out works continue to be experienced due to catching up on planned works cancelled during periods of lockdown. Some repairs are also taking longer because of delays obtaining materials. There has been improvement and more repairs are now being completed on time. We apologise for any delays you have experienced and are focused on improving completion times and delivering the best service we can.

If you need to report a repair please ring the office on **01900 602906**. If your repair is related to your boiler/heating system please ring Sure Maintenance direct on **0151 728 5739** or **0800 031 6578**. Repairs can also be reported via the tenant portal.

If you have an **emergency** repair outside of normal working hours please ring **0151 343 2762**.

Planned Maintenance Works April 2022– March 2023

This year we have a budget of £350,000 for Planned Maintenance works. This will be split approximately as follows:-



Kitchen Replacements – approx. 25

Bathroom Replacements – approx. 10

Central Heating Replacement – approx. 10

Window Replacements – approx. 20

Door Replacements – approx. 20

Fencing Replacements – (approx. 20 but to be confirmed)

Various Energy Efficiency Works (to be confirmed)

Visits by our Maintenance Team are currently being carried out to confirm the programme and tenants in properties with works required will be informed soon.

If you have any queries relating to planned works please contact Helen Timney on 01900 602906 or email on helen.timney@westfieldha.org.uk

We will also be ordering works for our external decorating programme as follows:-

External property decoration – approx. 120 properties

Fence painting – approx. 40 properties

The above works do not require an appointment for us to visit, but we will write to all tenants affected to confirm and clarify works once our lists are confirmed.

Progress on gas fire replacements

The fire replacement programme that has been running over the last 16 months or so is nearly complete. Over 200 fires required replacement and at the time of writing 6 replacements are outstanding. If you are still waiting for your fire to be fitted please contact the office on 01900 602906 ASAP.

We apologise for the delay completing these works which has been mainly due to problems with the supply of fires and the availability of contractors.

Your safety is our priority and although this has been a very challenging issue we want to take this opportunity to thank you for your patience and for working with us to achieve the replacements.

Health and Safety related works

All health and safety works such as gas servicing's, fire safety checks and electrical safety tests are continuing as normal. It is vitally important that you allow access for these important safety checks so please ensure that if you cannot keep an appointment you contact us ASAP to rearrange. If you do have any concerns giving the contractor's access to carry out these checks, please contact us to discuss.

Gas servicing

As most of you will know, Sure Maintenance have the contract to service your gas appliances annually.

At a recent meeting with Sure we noted a very high level of 'no access' visits despite appointment letters being sent ahead of each service.

Unfortunately, it is not an option for you NOT to have your service done (it's a legal requirement for all landlords to carry out an annual gas service).

We work to a very tight schedule to keep all gas appliances compliant. To ensure these services are carried out effectively and promptly, we do need your help and cooperation to keep appointment times.

Sure Maintenance will always be first to make contact with you offering a date to attend. If you are unable to keep this appointment you can contact Sure on

0800 0316578 or **0151 728 5739** . You can also contact us on **01900 602906** to rearrange.

If Sure Maintenance fail to gain access then we will send you a letter. This letter advises you that you will be charged £28.75 if access is not achieved. If access is subsequently not gained a second letter will be sent with an invoice for the missed appointment charge. If access is still not gained we will have no option but to issue you with a warning letter explaining we intend to issue a Notice Seeking Possession.

Still no access? You will be issued with a Notice Seeking Possession and Westfield Housing will commence legal proceedings to ensure access to your property. This may result in us applying to Court where we will ask the judge for possession of your home; you will be charged the cost of this.

The service lasts 45 minutes and it is carried out once a year, access is paramount to ensure you and your family are safe.

Please provide the necessary access so that servicings can be completed and your safety ensured.



Your Safety

As part of our repairs and maintenance service we carry out regular checks and services to ensure that your home is safe. Aside from the annual gas servicing's these include:

- Electrical safety. We are working on a 5 years rolling program to ensure every one of our homes has a legal updated EICR certificate in place. Foxcroft Electrical carry out these checks . We will write to notify you when your property is due and Foxcroft's will contact you directly to make an appointment that is suitable for you.
- Maintaining an asbestos register and checking asbestos risks, as necessary.
- Carrying out fire safety checks of all communal areas including weekly checks of alarms and any potential fire risks, and an annual fire risk assessment carried out by a suitably qualified Fire Officer.

Where these checks identify any safety issues, these should be attended too quickly.

In order to carry out these checks and tests it is important that we are able to access your home. We ask that you always provide access as requested so that these important checks are not missed. Failing to allow access for any these legal requirements is a breach of your tenancy.

If you have any concerns about the above checks and works and/or the safety of your home, please let us know.

Lettings

All vacant homes are continuing to be let on a normal basis with lettings made to people on the Housing Register.

Our Housing Register is reviewed every 6 months to ensure all applicants are still seeking housing and all information is up to date. If you have recently received a letter asking if you wish to remain on the Register please ensure that you respond. If a response is not received the housing application will be cancelled.

Housing application forms are available from our office or can be completed electronically via our website www.westfieldha.org.uk

Your Welfare

If you are struggling with any aspect of managing the current cost of living situation and need any help or advice, please let us know. We can help with things like foodbank vouchers and accessing funding from government projects to help with financial hardship.

Our Income Officer, Andrae Sharp, is only a phone call away and is always happy to give advice and help address any difficulties you may be having to pay your rent. So please , if you are experiencing problems with rent or other payments give Andrea a call on **01900 602906** during office hours.

There is a vast range of support available and depending on your issue we will either be able to assist you directly or put you in touch with the appropriate support group or agency. If you would prefer to contact a support group/agency directly useful contact numbers include:

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

Community Food Projects:

Moorclose Community Centre -Needham Drive, Workington, CA14 3SE Contact: Facebook 'Moorclose Community Centre'

The North Lakes Foodbank:

The foodbank operate across Allerdale at a number of locations, please contact the food bank to find a service near you on **07502311452**.

Customer Profiling Survey

Earlier this year we commissioned a company called Acuity to carry out a customer profiling exercise for us. This survey was to update the information we hold for you and to seek your views on your home, neighbourhood and services we provide.

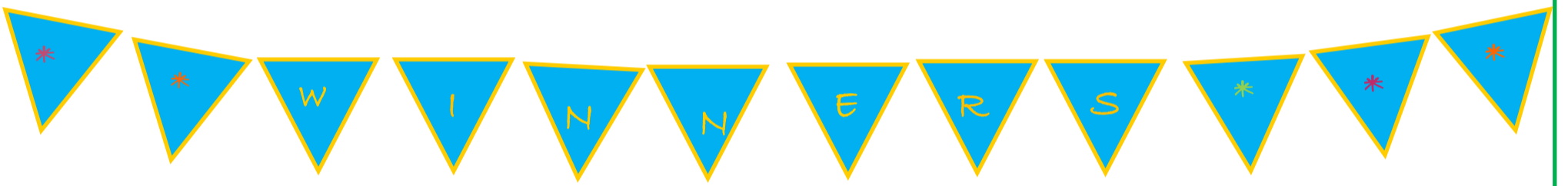
We promoted this project in our last newsletter, our Facebook page, our website and sent text messages, emails and letters out to every tenant in advance, we also offered prize draw entry for all tenants who took part in the surveys to be drawn Summer 2022.

We are delighted that Acuity successfully surveyed nearly 300 households. However, that was only 47% of our overall tenants. As a result of this, we will be trying to capture the remaining tenants ourselves.

We do understand not everyone is comfortable with sharing information with third parties. We want you to feel comfortable talking to us and want to reassure you that all information shared with us is confidential.



As promised we placed all names in a prize draw and are delighted to announce our winners, some of whom were happy to have their picture in our newsletter ...



1st Prize £250 high street voucher went to

* Mrs Weston, Cherry Tree Drive

2nd Prize £100 high street vouchers went to

* Mr & Mrs Wilson, Westfield Bridge Court

3rd Prize £100 high street vouchers went to

* Mr Johanssen, Richmond Road

4th Prize £50 high street vouchers went to

* Mrs Sewell, Row Brow Park

5th Prize £50 high street vouchers went to

* Miss Douglas, Main Street Dearham

Thankyou for working with us!



If you or someone you know have difficulty reading this newsletter and would like this information in large print, on CD or in Braille then please contact

Julie on (01900) 602906

Estate Walkabout

We have carried out 2 Westfield estate walkabouts with the help of tenants, board members and agencies. The next walkabout is scheduled for **August 2022**. There is no better opportunity than a walkabout for tenants to work in partnership with us to see what is going on around the estate and identify any areas for improvement.

If you would like to be involved please let Susan know on 01900 602906
enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk

We want your feed back on our services. Please let us know what you are happy with and what you are less happy with 01900 602906



Dog Foul

We have had more concerns raised from tenants about the amount of dog foul on communal grassed areas. We reiterate the importance of picking up after your dog at all times. We are working to ensure that disposal of any foul is as easy as possible e.g. via conveniently placed bins, but remind residents that failure to pick up foul is a breach of your tenancy and an offence.

Reporting dog foul

Did you know, it takes less than a minute to register to be able to submit and track the progress of your enquiries and reports on-line using "myAllerdale" on-line reporting. Go to <http://www.allerdale.gov.uk/forms/report-dog-mess.aspx> to register

Garden competition

Due to the success of the last garden competition we have decided we will run two competitions this year. All gardens will be judged during the estate walkabouts. Gardens recognised as being well cared for will receive a certificate through the door and those addresses will be added to the prize draw.

So get your green fingers working. You could be next winner of the £50 B&Q voucher.

We are happy to announce this years winner was Julie from Windsor Road

Congratulations Julie we look forward to seeing your garden next time



Estate clean up event

Our clean up event on 15th September 2021 last year was such a success, we have decided to make it an annual event.

Last year we had lots of help from agencies including

- Tivoli who provided the recycling bins
- AWSL brought their road sweeper
- ABC Education and Enforcement Officer brought bags and done an educational session with the children about rubbish and littering and the children colored and designed bags about what they had learned.
- We had 2 large skips from Brampton Skip hire
- John Blackburn made several journeys carrying items from tenants gardens to the skips.
- Fire Service helped load the skips and collect rubbish
- 10 children from Westfield School went around the estate collecting litter with a litter picker.
- Westfield housing staff helped collect rubbish and took part in the litter pick as well as providing refreshments and ice cream on the day .

We filled x3 large skips with rubbish from our estate which helps us provide a clean and safe environment for our tenants.

If you would like to join us during our next clean up day please contact either Susan or Julie on 01900602906 we would be delighted to welcome you along.

The next estate clean up event will be

Thursday 15th September 2022

I hope you can come and join us in making a difference to our community and keeping our estate a cleaner safer place to live.

If you have any ideas of what else we can do to keep our estate clean and tidy or you would like to suggest ways of tackling fly tipping on the estate please let us know on 01900 602906.



Getting involved: How you can help us deliver great homes and services.

Our Customer Engagement Strategy states “we want to put customers right at the heart of all the decisions we make about how we manage our homes and services now and into the future”.

To do this two new groups have been formed:

Residents Group

This group meets to discuss the needs of the Westfield estate and how we can make things better. Recent meetings have discussed a play area on the estate, which is now in development (initially a small football pitch and goals). Funding for the pitch has been provided by the Town Council, the Police and Westfield’s Neighbourhood Investment Fund.

This group also put together a report about open frontages and driveways which was presented to Board members for consideration.

We will also be working with the group to arrange trips, celebrations and social events.

If you would like to join the Residents Group please contact us on 01900 602906 and ask to speak to either Susan or Julie.

Customer Panel

The Customer Panel is a representative group of tenants and residents who meet 3 times a year. Its role will include:

- Looking at and discussing our performance e.g. on repairs, maintaining neighbourhoods etc,
- Considering funding applications to our Neighbourhood Investment Fund for community projects or to support individual tenants

The Panel will play a key role in ensuring we are meeting tenants expectations, holding us accountable for our decisions and performance as well as recognising what we do well.

As an initial task one member of the Panel took part in our rent arrears review process. Other members are looking at our Local Offer to tenants and at our new Neighbourhood Management Policy.

We will work with the Panel to deliver the performance and services that people want.

Ideas for future things to consider include:

- Planned maintenance programmes
- Look at our performance information
- Review our received customer feedback.

If you are interested in joining either group please contact either Julie or Susan on 01900 602906

Family trips and events 2022

Over the years we have run several successful trips and events for our tenants and residents. Unfortunately due to Covid we have been unable to do this for the last 2 years.

During our recent residents meeting we asked the group what they would like us to provide this year, the suggestions were:

- Blackpool trip for families
- Shopping/Market trip of adults
- Bingo night

If you can think of any other trips you think people would like us to run. Please let Susan know on 01900 602906

**Our First Event for 2022 is a
Family Trip to Blackpool
Saturday 30th July 2022**

One coach to depart Westfield Welfare 8.00 am

One coach to depart from Dearham 8.00 am

Depart Blackpool 6.00 pm

We are pleased to announce that following two cancellations due to Covid we are able to resume the annual trip to Blackpool. The cost of the trip is part funded from our Neighbourhood Fund and we are therefore able to offer the outing at the much reduced prices shown below. Priority will in the first instance be given to Westfield Housing tenants. Other residents in the community may be able to book, subject to availability. Please note only tenants who keep their account in order are eligible for this trip.

Please use the booking form below to book your place, returning the form to our office at the Minto Centre.

Anyone under 16 years must be accompanied by an adult.

One of the coaches will be running especially for our rural tenants so when booking please say if you want to be seated on the rural coach. The pick ups will be leaving from:

Dearham — The lay-by outside the Commercial Inn at 8.00 am

Great Broughton — Outside the Brewery House at 8.15 am

Cockermouth — The carpark behind Brewers fare at 8.30 am

Please be early as the coach will not wait after the above times.

Please secure your place by ringing us on 01900 602906 or calling in at the Housing Office



Payment

We are no longer able to accept cash payments. All payment will be taken via card payment. You can make your payment at the office where you will be required to complete a booking form .

You can do this Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

As well as the above groups we are looking for tenant board members.

The board’s role is to ensure that the Association is working effectively, safely and compliantly, including making sure that tenant views are being considered and that the Association maintains its strong community and tenant focus.

For an informal chat about becoming a member please get in touch with Debbie Fox 01900 602906 or email: enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk



Development update



Providing much needed bungalows on the Westfield estate is a top priority for us. Plans are progressing for the first phase of 19 bungalows on various plots of land around the estate. We have recently received planning permission for all except one of the plots and anticipate building works starting late summer/early autumn (there is a slight delay with the planned start date due to a delay with the transfer of the former welfare club site on Westfield Drive which is not owned by us).

If you wish to be considered for a new bungalow please make sure you are on our housing register. You can do this by going on our website www.westfieldha.org.uk and clicking on find a home/apply for housing. Alternatively application forms are available from the office.

A further phase of 9 bungalows is planned to start early next year. We are currently awaiting planning permission for these homes.

We will keep you updated of progress over the coming weeks and months via the website and this newsletter.

Tenancy Fraud

We have just undergone an audit looking at all areas of Fraud. We would like to take this opportunity to confirm that Westfield Housing takes a zero tolerance approach to all forms of tenancy fraud, including:

- Obtaining a tenancy through false statement
- Unauthorised assignment (passing a tenancy on to another party without our permission)
- Unlawful subletting or subletting without our permission of the whole or part of a tenants home

To combat tenancy fraud, Westfield will carry out a programme of tenancy follow up visits and will take photo ID for tenants at sign-up. Where tenancy fraud is discovered, Westfield, will look at each case on a case by case basis and will take prompt civil actions to recover the tenancy where fraud has been discovered.

Thinking of selling your home

In addition to our new developments, we continue to buy back properties on the estate from people who want to sell.

If you are thinking of selling your home, then please contact Diane Gorge on 01900 602906.

It is very simple and straight forward, we will arrange for a valuer to value your property and we will also carry out a survey. We will then make an offer to buy the property back from you. There will be no estate agent's fees to pay if you decide to sell directly to us.



“Play, indoors or outdoors is never trivial; it is serious and deeply meaningful. It needs to be cherished and encouraged by both parents and professionals; for in his/her choice of play a child reveals his future to Nature.” (Froebel in Lilley 1967).



Footsteps opened in 2004 providing Early Years childcare and education for children 3 months to 4 years and has received three consecutive outstanding Ofsted inspections.

Karen Fisher, the Nursery Manager retired in March 2022. We all wish her a long and happy retirement. We believe she is going to be kept busy with her grandchildren!

Footsteps in 2022, continues to provide a homely, calm environment with carefully chosen resources that encourage and allow children to explore openly as they freely choose to play indoors or outdoors.

Our teams ethos remains the same, we are a 'child centred' setting encouraging children to be independent and to choose for themselves, to decide whether or not they would like to work indoors or out, to be able to pour their own milk, to serve their own lunch, work in the workshop, paint, work with clay, garden and much more all under the caring supervision and guidance of highly qualified adults.

Our team recognises the importance of building children's knowledge, skills and confidence to prepare them for future success and happiness. We aim to ensure that children have the best start to their educational journey.

The COVID 19 pandemic has been, for everyone, a very challenging and difficult time and one which has seen the way we work turned inside out and upside down. We are very grateful to everyone who trusted us to care for and educate their children during this time.

If your child is age 3 months to 4 years and you would like them to attend Footsteps Nursery and experience this unique, wonderful environment please contact us:

Tel: 01900 872011 **email:** enquiries@footstepsnurseryworkington.com for further information on costs.

If your child is two years old you may be eligible for a free childcare place, to check if you are eligible go to www.cumbria.gov.uk/childcare or telephone 03457 125737.

Footsteps Nursery also offers Funded early years places for 3 & 4 year old children, depending on eligibility children can access 15 or 30 hours per week. Children who are eligible for 30 hours have the option to access 30 hours flexibly across 50 weeks rather than the 38 week traditional school term time option.

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

