

OVHA NEWSLETTER

Summer/Autumn 2024

Bowhill Miners Institute

We are delighted to announce completion of our redevelopment of the former Bowhill Miners Institute building in Cardenden.

This historic community building opened in April 1934 and has been unused for almost thirty years.

It has been carefully restored and renovated to become ten modern energy efficient flats and provides much-needed social housing, bringing the building back to its original place as an important landmark for the local community.



Bowhill Miners Institute - July 2024

Become a Member of OVHA

Anyone aged 16 or older can become a Member of OVHA. All you need to do is purchase a Share for £1 and you will then be invited to attend our Annual General Meeting, due to be held in September 2024.

We are always looking for interested tenants to help us improve our services, and if you are a Member you can also apply to become a Board Member.

If you would like to apply to become a member, please contact us on 01592 721917 or email ovha@orevalleyha.org.uk

News and Events

Drop In Exhibition- Miners Institute

A drop-in exhibition will be held in our Cardenden Office from Wednesday 11th September until Monday 16th between 10 am - 4pm so that the wider community can find out a bit more about the history of the Bowhill Miners Institute building and see for themselves the timeline from potential demolition to full refurbishment and provision of 10 modern homes.

Big Summer Sit Doon

Date - Friday 23rd August 9am - 2.30pm

Venue - The Ecology Centre, Kinghorn Loch, Burntisland KY3 9YG

Our Big Summer Sit Doon event is on tour this Summer! This fun event will be delivered in partnership with **The Ecology Centre, Cosy Kingdom and Climate Action Fife.**



We will also be joined by Carolyn from the **Big IDEA Project**. Transport to and from the venue, with refreshments and lunch provided also.

Numbers will be limited due to the size of the venue but if you would like to join us for this event, please call Vicky Murdoch on 01592 721917 as soon as possible to book your space.



Bowhill Miners Institute

Once the focal point for miners' welfare activities including dances, weddings, education programmes and even sustaining industrial action, the building was saved from demolition and reconfigured with a modern extension added to the rear to bring it back to life. This is all the more valuable following the recently announced national housing emergency and high demand for affordable homes.



During the refurbishment

There are 10 properties in total which are a mix of one and two bedroom flats. The flats are designed with an open plan kitchen and living area, which brings a modern feel to the layout throughout the properties.

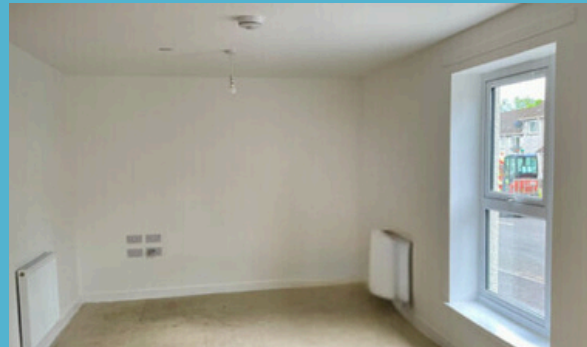
In accordance with new guidelines a modern sprinkler system is fitted in both parts of the building.



Bowhill Miners Institute prior to refurb

The redevelopment was not without its challenges but our delivery partners and contractors have worked tirelessly to produce beautiful new homes and we thank them for their efforts.

The building was formally opened on the 17th of June following an 'open day' in the morning where community stakeholders were invited to visit and see the completed development.



Refurb complete

Welcome Euan

We would like to welcome Euan Smith to Ore Valley.

Euan joined us in April 2024 as our Customer Service Assistant and will play a key role in our frontline service.



We would like to wish Euan well in his new role in what will hopefully be a long and successful career in housing.

Maintaining your home

This Summer/Autumn our Spotlight Update is on the Asset Management Team who have provided us with Hints and Tips for maintaining a Healthy Home and an update on our Painterwork Programme.

Painterwork

Our Contractor Bell Group has been busy completing this year's painting programme at Bowhouse Terrace, Westfield Brae, Westfield Terrace, Whitehall Avenue, Whitehall Drive and Whitehall Crescent, Cardenden.

They have freshened up external facias and windows of 80 homes.

For a small number of homes, the paint colour was changed to compliment the houses in the surrounding area. Tenants were delighted with the colour.

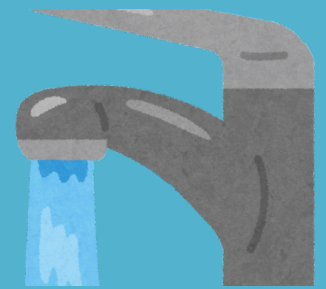


Legionella Safety

Why is this important? It is your responsibility to keep the hot and cold-water system in your home in good working order.

You should flush both hot and cold-water systems by running all outlets for at least 2 minutes where a property has been left vacant for any time. (e.g., holidays or working away).

Also, flushing showers which are only occasionally used, by running water for at least 2 minutes along with cleaning shower heads, descaling/disinfecting at least every 2 months.



Drains

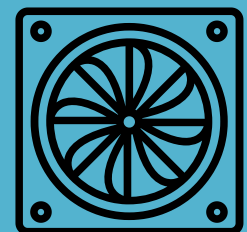
We get lots of calls about drains. Do you have a slow drain sink, bath, or shower?

It might be helpful to pour down a teacup that has been equally filled with white vinegar and baking soda. You can maintain clean and fresh-smelling drains by doing this once a month.

Extractor Fans

Is your fan in tip top condition and keeping condensation in check? Do you regularly clean the fan? Some Tips:

Each week, Hoover your fans and carefully wipe the outer cover with a warm solution of washing up liquid and wipe the fan blades. Rinse and dry thoroughly with a cloth or a kitchen towel.

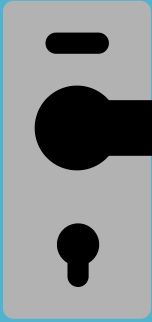


Silicone Seals

Do you regularly check the seals surrounding your washbasin, sink and bathtub?

By checking once a month, you may help prevent minor leaks or drips that could impact the surrounding area. Tell us over the phone, via email, or in person if you believe the seal needs to be redone.





Doors and Window Locks

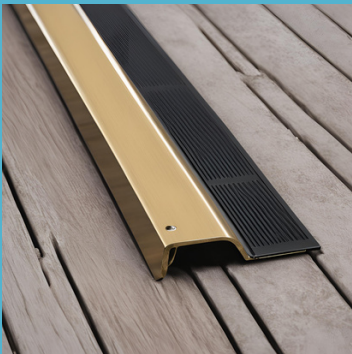
Have you a squeaky or stiff door, keylock or window?

Spraying WD40 to the hinges or keylock may help to remedy this and keep your door and windows in tip top condition.

Loft Spaces

It is a recommendation that you do not use the loft space in your home as it may contain electrical equipment for mechanical fans or Solar Panels.

It should be kept clutter free to allow proper airflow and be easily accessible for maintenance purposes, inspection or repair works to be carried out safely.



External Door Threshold Bars

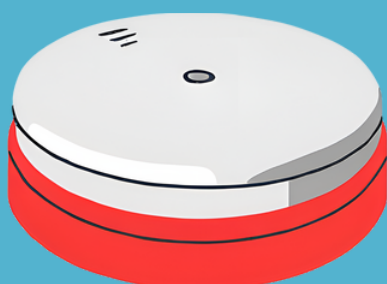
What is the purpose of this and how do you clean this? The threshold bar is the metal strip installed at the bottom of your external facing doors.

Keeping your threshold bar clean and dirt free helps to avoid any water getting into your home. By hoovering and using a warm dish soap solution will remove any dirt.

Kitchen Care

Did you know you should avoid using bleach or wire scourers in your kitchen?

Using a mild cleanser, microfiber towels, and clean-up spills will keep your kitchen shining. Using a heat mat and chopping board will protect your worktops.



Smoke Alarms

Do you know how to take care of your smoke alarms?

Hoovering or wiping down will keep dust at bay. For the safety of your home, you should also carry out a weekly test and replace the battery yearly, if required.

Recharges and Accounts

Housing repairs and maintenance is one of the most important services we provide. An integral part of this service is our ability to recharge tenants for the cost of a repair where the tenancy agreement identifies a repair as the tenants responsibility. This includes but is not limited to repairs due to negligence, wilful damage or accidental damage on the part of the tenant, a member of their household or a visitor to their home.

The Association also needs to recover any legal fees that are the tenant's responsibility, such as where we instruct legal action due to non-payment of rent, or non-payment of a rechargeable repair.



If a tenant incurs a recharge, we will create an account that is separate from the tenant's rent account. It is the tenant's responsibility to ensure that there is no outstanding balance on their account, or they are maintaining a suitable arrangement to clear the outstanding balance.

If you have a repair that is rechargeable, we will notify you as soon as possible and send you an invoice confirming the amount to be paid. You will be expected to contact us to make a payment or agree a suitable arrangement to clear the balance on your Sundry account as soon as possible.

Tenants may be recharged in the following circumstances:

- Failure to provide access for an emergency call-out.
- Requesting an emergency a call-out for a non-emergency repair.
- Replacing locks due to keys being lost or stolen.
- Emergency call out for total loss of power due to fault with the tenants own electrical appliance.
- Damage caused by tenant, a member of the tenant's household or a visitor.
- Damage caused by tenant negligence, i.e. failing to report a water leak which results in further damage to our property.
- Where the tenant incorrectly uses the heating system, i.e. misuse of heating thermostat (low batteries) or no credit in gas or electric meter.

There are some cases where the Association may waive a recharge if the tenant is vulnerable or some additional support is required, however in all cases we encourage tenants to take out their own home contents insurance as this can could provide additional cover for accidental damage caused by the tenant or other member of their household.

Where a tenant has not looked after their home in accordance with the tenancy agreement and/or has accrued a debt due to rechargeable repairs; and persistently refuses to co-operate with the Association to maintain a suitable arrangement, they will be issued with written warning and thereafter the Association may take the decision to suspend the tenant from receiving our standard repair service. This includes all non-emergency or non-essential repairs and may also suspend the tenant from receiving any planned maintenance improvements in their home such as new kitchens or bathrooms.

If this happens the tenant will be expected to work with their Housing Officer so that we can lift the suspension as soon as possible, or further legal action will be taken that could result in the tenant losing their tenancy due to their waste and neglect of the property.





Void Relet Standards

Exit Standard

OVHA has standards that it expects tenants to achieve prior to them vacating the property. This information is provided to tenants on the pre-termination visit, but everyone should be aware that as a minimum standard we expect your home to have an acceptable standard of decoration.

Decoration

In general wallpaper should be whole and clean and all paintwork should be clean, free from nicotine stains and finished to a reasonable standard. Woodwork, including internal doors, should not be marked or damaged.

If your home does not meet the required standard, you may be asked to redecorate to an acceptable standard or carry out preparatory work before you return your keys, e.g. stripping wallpaper or rubbing down woodwork.

Bathrooms and Kitchens

All fixtures should be free from damage, cracks or chips. The cost of replacing kitchen or bathroom fixtures that have been damaged by the tenant or their household, other than through normal wear and tear will be recharged to the outgoing tenant.

Electrical Fittings, Sockets and Switches

All sockets and switches should be free from cracks. Checks will also be carried out to sockets and switches that have been painted or are badly stained. Replacement of damaged fittings will be rechargeable.

Internal Doors

Damaged or missing doors can either be replaced by the outgoing tenant, or they can have the work carried out on a rechargeable basis. On average the cost of replacing an internal pass door is £130.00 including VAT, so for this reason if you have a damaged door, or any other fixture in your home that is your responsibility it is better to report this to us so that you can have the damaged fixture repaired or replaced as soon as possible rather than being hit with a large bill at the end of your tenancy.

External

Gardens should also be well maintained, with footpaths and any hard landscaped areas kept in a good condition. Before a tenant leaves, they will be asked to make sure that the garden is left in a reasonable condition or the cost of bringing this up to a reasonable standard will be recharged to the outgoing tenant.

Tenant Alteration

In general, there will be no need to remove or replace tenant alterations or improvements, such as kitchens, bathrooms or light fittings simply because they are non-standard. Provided they are in a good condition, have the required permission and meet the appropriate regulations, such work will be left in the property and in some cases the outgoing tenant may be compensated for the work they have done.

Cleanliness

The property should be in a clean and tidy condition. Sanitary ware (baths, sinks and toilets) should be clean and free from stains. Kitchen units, work surfaces and tiled areas should be free from dirt or grease. Lofts should be clear, and all personal belongings removed from the property. The carpets and floor coverings must be removed or left in situ with the prior agreement of your Housing Officer. If they are not, the cost to the Association of doing this work will be recharged to the outgoing tenant.



Void Relet standards continued:

Void Cost and Budgets

Our budget for the year for getting homes ready for relet is £92k. This is known as void costs and does not include the lost rental income for the period when the property is empty. Our spend on void costs for the period from 1st April 2024 to 30th June 2024 has been overspent by £10k with £5K void repairs having been recharged to outgoing tenants because they failed to meet the required exit standard.

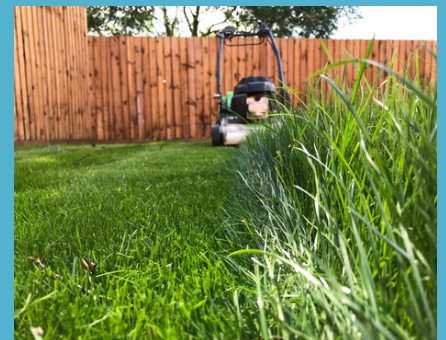


This is why it is important that tenants look after their property as this overspend will put pressure on our budgets for the rest of the financial year. Unfortunately we did recently have a property returned to us where nicotine damage has meant that we have had to paint the walls and woodwork, replace internal doors and electrical sockets and light switches at a cost of £5K. Costs like this will be recharged to the outgoing tenant but it could take several years for us to recover the debt, and higher than average void costs will impact our future budgets.

If you would like to join a tenant working group to review our void relet standard and rechargeable arrears policy, please contact Vicky Murdoch on 01592 721917 or email housing@orevalleyha.org.uk.

Estate Management Inspections

Our Housing Officers aim to inspect gardens and estate areas every few weeks in the summer. Over the past 2 or 3 months we have given advice to tenants about poor garden condition, un-taxed vehicles in driveways and rubbish being stored within gardens.



We have informed many tenants of a change to Fife Council's bulk uplift service where they will uplift most household items for free - see page 9 for more information about this service.

We encourage tenants to have a tidy garden and believe this often helps with wellbeing, we want all our estates to look good and would also encourage tenants to clean and weed paths and mono-block driveways as their condition can often deteriorate or worsen if not cleaned and weeded regularly.

If you are struggling with your garden, we may be able to offer advice and assistance, so please speak to your Housing Officer if you think you need help or support.



Payments/Direct Debits

Direct Debit Payments: are simple, secure, convenient and streamline the payment process by reducing the risk of late or missed payments, while providing us with improved cash flow and reduced administrative costs.

However, unfortunately due to a change in our systems, we are no longer able to offer the 30th and 31st of the month as a Direct Debit payment date for those who choose to pay monthly.

The reason for this change is because if the 30th or 31st is not a banking day a Direct Debit payment will not be collected from tenant's bank accounts and posted to the relevant rent accounts until the first banking day of the following month.



This means that for some tenants we are reporting that their rent account is in arrears for the months that are affected as these payments were received late.

We appreciate that the tenants who are affected by this are not at fault as this is how their Direct Debit was originally set up, but in order for us to resolve the issue we must ensure that no new direct debits are set up later than the 28th of the month. We will contact tenants who are affected by this to discuss further, and we will try to offer a solution that suits the personal circumstances of our tenants.

Benefits update July 2024

Universal Credit migration - DWP have previously said that they would not begin moving claimants of income-related ESA only, or income-related ESA plus Housing Benefit, until 2028. However, they have now moved this forward to September this year, with a plan to have sent migration notices to all claimants by the end of 2025. If you're in this group and get a migration notice, don't panic, help is available from the Big IDEA - call 07826 511875 or email: thebigidea@fifehg.org.uk.

Social Security Scotland Local Delivery Team - Responsibility for some benefits has been devolved from DWP to the Scottish Government and new Scottish benefits are gradually being introduced. Like every area in Scotland, Fife has its own dedicated team of friendly and skilled advisers to help you claim any of Social Security Scotland's benefits, including Child and Adult Disability Payments, Scottish Child Payment, Funeral Support Payment, Young Carer's Grant and Best Start Grants. They can meet you at a community venue or visit you at home to complete forms. Contact them through the Social Security Scotland helpline number below.

Carer's Support Payment (CSP) - The latest new Scottish benefit is Social Security Scotland's replacement for UK Carer's Allowance. It will be available for new claimants in Fife from 19th August. There are some differences to who is eligible for CSP compared to Carer's Allowance - most student carers can get it, and if you've recently come from abroad, the length of time that you have to have lived in the UK or Ireland before claiming is shorter.

For more information, please contact the Big IDEA on 07826 511875 or email: thebigidea@fifehg.org.uk

Details of how to apply are available at: <https://www.mygov.scot/carers-support-payment/how-to-apply>, or phone the Social Security Scotland helpline on 0800 182 2222 (Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm).

If you already get Carer's Allowance you'll stay on it until Social Security Scotland transfer you to the new benefit - you won't have to reapply and there will be no interruption to your payments.

Tenant Participation

Tenant Forum - Get your voice heard

We are looking to set up a Customer Forum of our local tenants who are interested in working with us to focus on identifying our tenants' needs and delivering best service and value for money.



Being part of our forum provides tenants with an opportunity to have their voice heard and have a say on how our housing services are delivered. This is a two - way process, where landlords value the engagement and recognise it as a vital component to improve the services they provide.

Members of the forum act on behalf of the tenants and pass information and decisions back to them. The Forum will meet 4 times a year and will allow tenants to help shape future policies and to hear feedback from the Housing Management team.

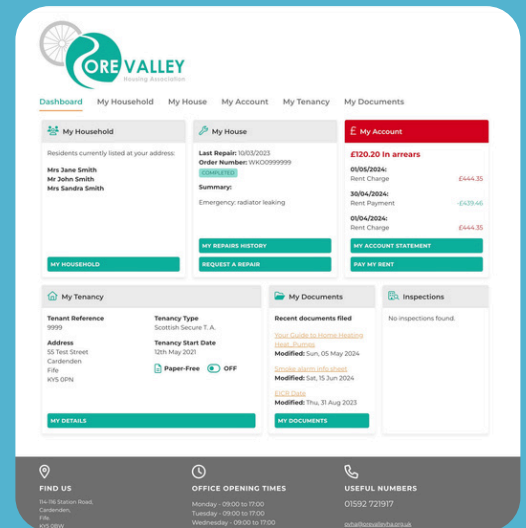
The Tenants Forum is open to all Ore Valley tenants. If you are interested in becoming part of a forum please contact **Vicky Murdoch on 01592 721917** for further information and to register your interest.

Tenant Portal - My Home

We have been busy working with Homemaster (our new tenant management system) and Housing Online - to revise and update our previous My Home portal.

This system will be up and running over the next few months and will allow every tenant to access their rent and repairs account and allow for an easier process to contact us

If you would like to join a tenant working group to test and review our new My Home portal, please contact Vicky Murdoch on 01592 721917 or email housing@orevalleyha.org.uk.



Fife Council free Bulky Uplift Service

What you will need to know before applying for this service:

You will need Login details for your MyAccount: If you don't have a MyAccount with Fife Council, you'll be prompted to register when you begin the online form. You will need to provide your contact details and details of all the items to be uplifted: Refer to the list of bulky items Fife Council can uplift. **If it's not on this list, it can't be uplifted.** Each item is allocated a certain number of units, and you can use up to a maximum of 18 units per collection.

Important Contacts

Ore Valley Housing Association

- Facebook: Ore Valley Housing Association
- Website: www.orevalleyha.org.uk
- Email: ovha@orevalleyha.org.uk
- Address: 114-116 Station Road, Cardenden, Fife KY5 0BW
- Tel: 01592 721 917
- Hours: Mon-Fri, 09:00 to 17:00

Fife Council:

- Switchboard: 03451 55 0000
- Environmental Health (Rubbish collection, dog fouling etc): 03451 55 0022
- Antisocial Behaviour: 03451 55 0033
- Fife Council Welfare Fund Team: 0300 555 0265 or email: welfare.fund@fife.gov.uk

Advice and Help:

- National Grid: 0800 111 999
- Scottish Water: 0800 778 778
- NHS 24: 111
- Homeless Emergency Number (Free): 0800 028 6231
- Citizens Advice & Rights Fife: 0345 1400 095

What would you like to see in the next Winter edition of our newsletter.

If there is something you think we should be focusing on please just let us know. You can contact our Communications Team on - comms@orevalleyha.org.uk

We are proud to be a Breast Feeding Friendly Organisation



Quiz Time



Name: _____ Date: _____

Baby Animals

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the crossword puzzle grid with the names of each animal's baby. Use the word bank if you get stuck.

Across

2. Sheep

4. Crocodile

5. Fox

6. Dog

7. Duck

11. Eagle

12. Bear

14. Deer

15. Kangaroo

Down

1. Horse

3. Rabbit

5. Goat

6. Pig

8. Chicken

9. Cow

10. Cat

13. Human

WORD BANK	
BABY	HATCHLING
BUNNY	JOEY
CALF	KID
CHICK	KIT
CUB	KITTEN
DUCKLING	LAMB
EAGLET	PIGLET
FAWN	PUPPY
FOAL	

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To be in with a chance to win £30 High Street Vouchers - Return postal entries to Tenant Engagement Officer, Ore Valley Housing, Cardenden or scan or take a photo and email it to vmurdoch@orevalleyha.org.uk

Remember to include your name, address and contact phone number, competitions close at 5pm on Friday 30th August 2024.

Goodluck!

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

