

VIEWPOINT

Spring 2025

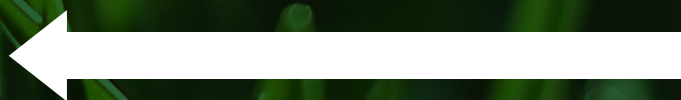
# news**point**

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## Important Information

### Telephone

0131 668 4247

### Freephone Repair Number

0800 345 7347

### Out of Hours Emergency Number

0345 604 4686

[admin@viewpoint.org.uk](mailto:admin@viewpoint.org.uk)

[www.viewpoint.org.uk](http://www.viewpoint.org.uk)

 /ViewpointHA

### Opening Hours

#### Monday, Tuesday & Thursday

9am - 5pm

#### Wednesday

10am - 5pm

#### Friday

9am - 4.30pm

### Easter Opening Hours

Our offices at 4 South Oswald Road will be closed on 18th and 21st April 2025.

Please note that there will be no staff on site on these dates.

If you have an emergency during this time tenants in sheltered and alarmed housing are still able to contact Telecare by using their pull cords.

Our out of hours emergency support service can be contacted by all tenants on **0345 604 4686**

# Welcome to your Spring Edition of **Newspoint**



*As we enter into Spring, I have already noticed the first signs of life in my garden – snowdrops, daffodils, and wild primroses have begun to bloom. Despite the somewhat unpredictable weather, they have continued to do so, offering a wonderful display of colour and renewal that brightens my days.*

Welcome to your Spring edition of Newspoint. As always, we have a range of articles to keep you informed and entertained. Inside, you will find the results of the recent rent and service charge consultation, an important update on fire safety in common areas, and many of your wonderful stories and photographs.

We are also delighted to announce that we will be holding a Tenant Conference on 20 June. It is an opportunity for you to engage with us and information on how to book is on page 9. We have information on the various ways that you can become involved with Viewpoint and have your voice heard.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Newspoint, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts and feedback.

Best Wishes from  
Grace, Jim, Phillip and Heather  
**The Editorial Team**

## Competition Winners

*Congratulations to Christina at John Hunter Court for finding 10 snowmen in the winter edition of Newspoint.*

Congratulations also to Renee for getting full marks in our quiz in the Spring 2024 edition of Newspoint quiz. My apologies that Renee only got to hear of this last month. Six entries managed to score full marks in the quiz.

Both winners received a £25 shopping voucher.





# Do You Need Documents in a Different Format? We Can Help!



## Large Print

As we age, our eyesight can change, making it more difficult to read standard print. This can affect our ability to stay informed, sometimes leading to feelings of isolation.

At Viewpoint, we understand how important it is to access essential information easily. That is why we offer documents like our letters, leaflets, and even our Newpoint publication in large print, so you won't miss out on any crucial details.

## Audio and Braille

If you need Newpoint in a different format, we also provide it on audio (currently available on CD only but we are looking at other alternatives) and in Braille.

Simply let us know, and we will make sure to send Newpoint in a format that works best for you.

## Happy to Translate

Additionally, Viewpoint is a member of Happy to Translate (HTT), a service designed to assist those whose first language is not English and need help to understand communication in English.

Whether you need translation or an interpreter to help you communicate with us, we are here to make sure important information is delivered in a way that is easy for you to understand. Just let us know how we can assist!

At Viewpoint, we are committed to ensuring that all of our tenants can access the information they need, no matter their language or vision requirements.



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

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## New Direct Debit Payment Options

To improve the service that we offer our Tenants in relation to Direct Debit collection, we have appointed Allpay Limited to collect payments on our behalf.

Tenants who already pay by Direct Debit will be transferred over to Allpay from 1st April 2025 and have received correspondence regarding this. One of the key benefits for our Tenants is that we can now arrange any day collections on various frequencies e.g. weekly, fortnightly and monthly.

So, if you are not already paying your Rent and Service Charges by Direct Debit and wish to sign up for a more flexible payment collection service then please don't hesitate to contact your Housing Officer and they can make the necessary arrangements for you.

If you have any questions about these changes, please call us on 0131 668 4247 (option 2).



# Rent & Service Changes

## Agreed for 2025/2026

**A**t Viewpoint's Board Meeting on the 19 February 2025, the Board approved the rent and service charge increases from 1st April 2025. In agreeing these they considered the tenant consultation responses, the budget for 2025/2026, an affordability assessment of the new rents and a measure of how our rents compare with other similar landlords.

The increase will enable Viewpoint to continue to deliver the services, improvements, day to day repairs and other benefits such as activities and support as per the business plan.

We are not complacent about the impact this will have on you and know that any increase will be unpopular and may cause financial hardship. All our tenants have access to a dedicated in-house welfare rights advice and a resource supporting tenants with money and fuel advice. Everyone will receive a simplified form to complete in with their rent increase notification, if they want our Welfare Rights Officer to assist them.

We strongly advise anyone who is concerned about paying their rent to contact us and we will do our best to support and advise you.

The agreed increases which will be applied from 1 April 2025 are:

- 6.7% increase to rent charges
- 1.7% increase to laundry facilities, common area expenses and landscaping charges
- 5% increase to housing support charges
- 52% increase to central heating or central heating and hot water charges

By the time you read this, you will have received your letter advising what your rent and service charges will be for the coming year.

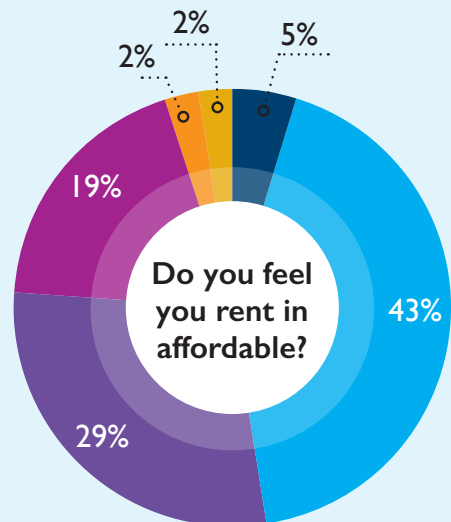
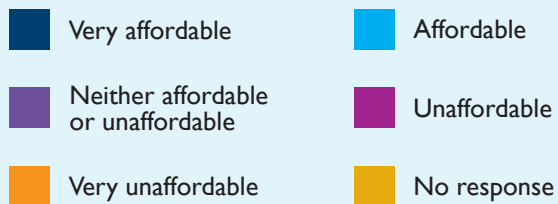
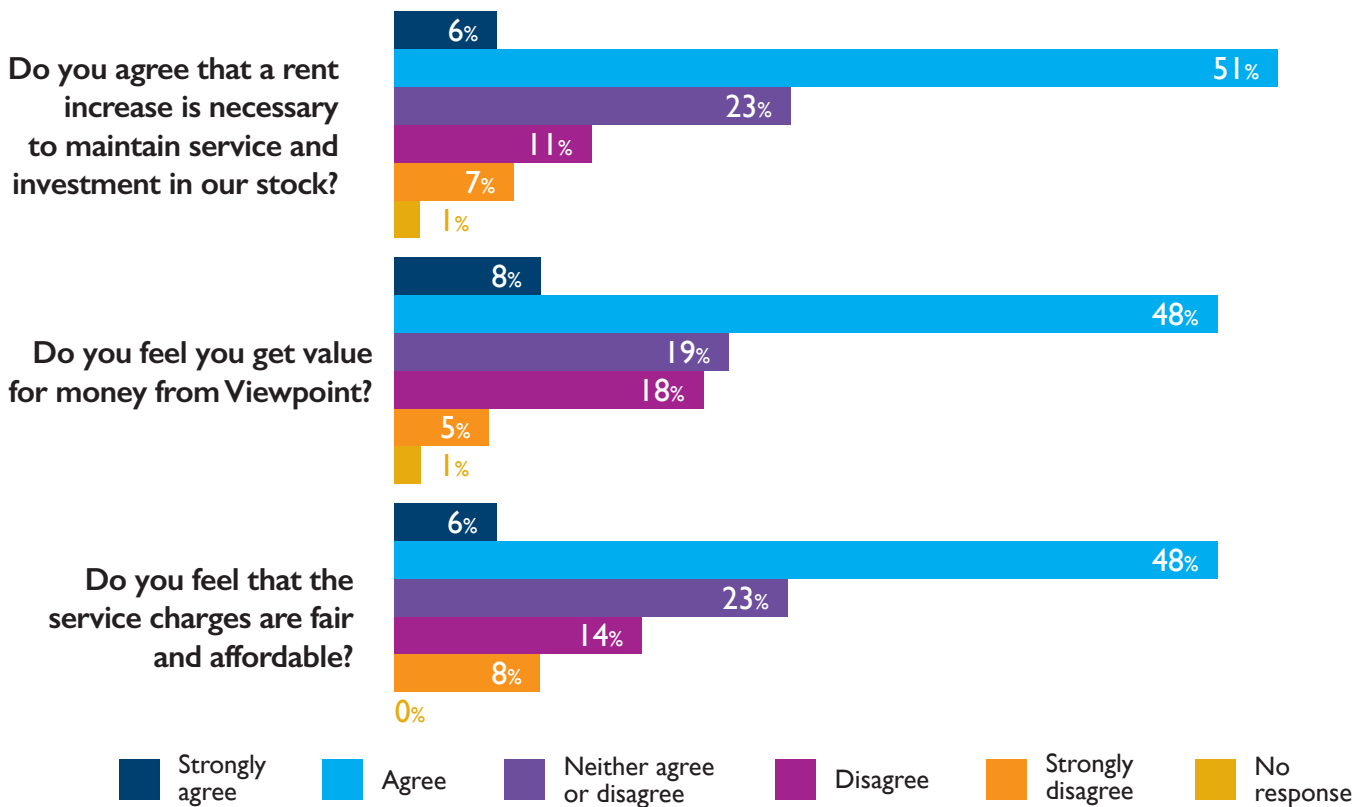
The following provides a summary of the consultation exercise and responses received. We received 202 responses to the consultation which equates to a 16% return. The majority of tenants agreed or were ambivalent to the key questions.



RENT & SERVICE CHANGES AGREED FOR 2025/2026

Where there were negative responses, particularly around whether Viewpoint is felt to provide value for money, these will be considered in conjunction with the Tenant Satisfaction Survey results and will form a key topic area at the tenant conference to be held in June.

The tenant consultation report is available on our website, [viewpoint.org.uk/news/rent-and-service-consultation-for-2025-26/](http://viewpoint.org.uk/news/rent-and-service-consultation-for-2025-26/) and if you wish a printed copy please contact us and we will send you one. Here is the feedback from the questions we asked:



## Who to Contact for Help and Advice

We understand that the cost of living crisis is of a great concern to you. We want to make sure that you know where to seek help and advice if you need it. Below are some services that might be of assistance to you. If these do not meet your needs then please contact us and we will try to assist. You can speak to your Coordinator, Housing Officer or you can telephone one of our Housing Advisors on **0131 668 4247** (option2).

## Your Rent Increase Letter

If you have any queries regarding your rent increase letter then please do not hesitate to call us on **0131 668 4247** (Option 2).

## Welfare Benefits Service

If you would like any help to see if you are entitled to any welfare benefits, or if you would like help to apply for benefits you can contact our Welfare Benefits Officer, Eleanor Eccles by:

- Telephone: **0131 662 5144**
- Email: [eleanor.eccles@viewpoint.org.uk](mailto:eleanor.eccles@viewpoint.org.uk) or
- Speak to any member of staff and they will ask Eleanor to contact you.

## Debt Advice Service

We work in partnership with other housing associations to access the services of a debt advisor. Referrals can be made through your Housing Officer or by contacting Eleanor Eccles (Welfare Benefits Officer).

## Energy Advice Service

Viewpoint, in partnership with other housing associations, have access to energy advice services and you can speak to any member of staff who will be happy to refer you to service for advice and assistance.

## Foodbanks

If you are struggling financially then you can get some help with food from foodbanks.

Some foodbanks have a referral system and others you can self-refer. You can find out more details about your nearest foodbank online using the links below. If you are unable to access this information on-line or would like more information about referrals you can either speak to your Coordinator, your Housing Officer or telephone our main office on **0131 668 4247** (option 2) where one of our Housing Advisors will be happy to help you.

## Edinburgh

[edinburgh.gov.uk/cost-living/food-bank-information](http://edinburgh.gov.uk/cost-living/food-bank-information)

## Fife

[fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/benefits-and-money-advice/food-banks/access-to-food-locations](http://fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/benefits-and-money-advice/food-banks/access-to-food-locations)

## Midlothian

[midlothian.gov.uk/info/200301/cost\\_of\\_living](http://midlothian.gov.uk/info/200301/cost_of_living)

## East Lothian

[eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210634/covid-19/12506/food\\_resources\\_in\\_east\\_lothian](http://eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210634/covid-19/12506/food_resources_in_east_lothian)



# Get Involved with Viewpoint



## Tenant Participation Update

**T**here are a lot of things happening in Tenant Participation right now, and many ways you can get involved to help make a difference to the services we provide to you.

### What We Are Currently Working On:

- **Tenant Satisfaction Survey:** We recently sent out our Tenant Satisfaction Survey, giving you the opportunity to provide feedback on our services. By the time you read this, the survey will have closed, and the data will be collated by our contractor. The report will be sent to our Board of Management. We will provide initial feedback and discuss next steps at our Tenant Conference in June. You will find more information in upcoming issues of Newspoint.
- **Tenant Participation Leaflet:** We are currently working with our tenant volunteers to review our Tenant Participation Leaflet. This leaflet explains what tenant participation is about and provides information on how you can get involved.
- **Quarterly Meetings Review:** In the last issue of Newspoint, we told you we were carrying out a review of our quarterly meetings. In order to get your feedback we included questions in the Tenant Satisfaction Survey to understand what you like or dislike about these meetings, as well as what you would like them to look like in the future. We will discuss this at our Tenant Conference on 20 June and feedback any changes through Newspoint.

- **Rent and Service Charge Consultation:** This was completed during December and January, and the report was sent to the Board in February 2025 with tenant views on the proposals. You can find the outcome of the consultation in this edition of Newspoint.

### What Is Coming Up and How You Can Get Involved:

- **Tenant Conference:** Our Tenant Conference will take place on Friday, 20 June 2025, at the COSLA Conference Centre at Haymarket. For more information and to book your place, please see below.
- **Review of Tenant Handbook:** The Tenant Handbook was produced in early 2021, and it is due for review. Since then, there have been a number of changes to some policies, and we are looking for a group of tenants to help us with the review. Please see below if you would like to volunteer to be part of this review group.
- **Performance Report:** Each year, we meet with a group of tenants to discuss our performance as a registered social landlord. Data will be provided to the Scottish Housing Regulator in May, and the tenants' review group will meet in August/September to discuss the statistics with relevant staff and agree on the format of the report that will be published on our website. If you would like to volunteer to be part of this group, please see below.

- **Keyholder Responsibilities Leaflet:** If you live in sheltered or amenity housing, we ask you to provide details of a keyholder who can be contacted in the event of an emergency. We previously had a leaflet explaining what a keyholder may be asked to do, but this leaflet is now out of date, and we would like to review it. Please see below if you would like to volunteer to be part of the group of tenants who will review this leaflet.
- **Newspoint:** We continue to produce Newspoint three times per year, and we welcome anyone who would like to be involved in its production. Whether you have ideas for articles, would like to write articles, or are a good proofreader, or would just like to be part of the team – just let us know. See below on how to be volunteer to be part of this group.
- **Tenant Participation Strategy:** We will begin talking to tenants about how we communicate with you, how we consult, and how tenant participation should look in the future. The strategy is not due to be presented to the Board until 2026, but we recognise the importance of speaking to as many

tenants as possible to get it right for you. Look out for invitations to coffee mornings, coffee afternoons, or online meetings coming up in your area over the next year.

- **Customer Service Standards:** We are bringing together the tenants who worked on this during 2023 to review our progress and where we are with the customer service standards.

## How to Get Involved:

If you would like to get involved in any of the above activities, please call our office on 0131 668 4247 (option 2) and ask to speak to Heather. We look forward to hearing from you!

**Note for Tenants in Fife** – we recognise that you may not wish to travel to Edinburgh to take part in a meeting. If there are enough tenant volunteers for a specific project from Fife then we will hold a second group somewhere in Fife to assist you to attend. Alternatively, you can ask to attend any meeting online.

## Viewpoint Tenant Conference ‘Shaping the Future Together’

Join us for an engaging and informative session where we discuss important updates and plans for the future:

- Business Plan Overview for next Five Years
- Results of Tenant Satisfaction Survey
- Tenant Involvement

This is your opportunity to share your thoughts, ask questions, and help shape the future of Viewpoint.

A buffet lunch and refreshments will be provided. Transport to and from the venue will be provided.

**Date:** Friday 20 June 2025

**Time:** 10:30am—3:30pm

**Venue:** COSLA Conference Centre, Haymarket

To book a place and to book transport if required please contact us on 0131 668 4247 (option 2) or email [tp@viewpoint.org.uk](mailto:tp@viewpoint.org.uk). Alternatively speak to your onsite Coordinator and ask them to book a place for you.

# READY, STEADY COOK



## Have you ever said:

“ I’ve cooked for a big family for years – there’s no need for me to learn more.

I don’t cook because recipes are too complicated or expensive.

I know what we should eat, but... ”

It is easy to fall into the habit of ready meals or simple standbys like cereal or beans on toast every day, especially as life changes and we are no longer cooking for a crowd. Thanks to funding from the Viewpoint Trust, we were able to ask Edinburgh Community food to come in, bringing fun and practical food-focussed coffee mornings to you.

## A Recent Success Story

At a recent session at Croft-an-Righ, attendees got hands-on tips on staying hydrated (who knew ice-lollies could help?) and learned about good and bad fats, essential vitamins, and more. Participants left with a colourful, easy-to-read recipe book featuring simple, budget-friendly recipes, complete with pictures and helpful tips.

However, it was not all learning—there was laughter too! Attendees reminisced about childhood favourites and shared recipes and cooking tips. Stories and quizzes brought everyone together, inspiring many to cook a little more at home while still making room for the occasional treat.

## What People Are Saying

Participants raved about how fun and engaging the sessions were, with one tenant saying, “Edinburgh Community Food made the learning really interesting and exciting.” Join the Fun!

Edinburgh Community Food will be visiting more of our sites soon, so keep an eye out for them.

## Interested in taking it further?

We are offering a free six-week cookery course with Edinburgh Community Food with free transport provided (funded by the Viewpoint Trust).

If you would like to join a class then you must book a place as numbers in each class are restricted. We will be running the class throughout the year so if you are interested, contact Heather at 0131 662 5142 or email [newspoint@viewpoint.org.uk](mailto:newspoint@viewpoint.org.uk).

Whether you are looking to brush up your skills, learn something new, or just enjoy great company, Edinburgh Community Food has something for everyone!





# Fit for All

## A Fitness Class for All Abilities



A weekly fitness class at Lade Court has been running successfully since October last year, offering exercise sessions for people of all abilities. Thanks to a generous grant from the Viewpoint Trust, the class (including transport to and from the venue) is fully funded.

The classes are taken by John, from FitCare Scotland. FitCare Scotland specialise in running exercise classes for older adults and individuals with disabilities. The sessions are lively, fun, and beneficial to those attending. John leads the class in doing exercises such as chair squats, chair marching, balance exercises and arm lifts (sometimes with light weights), helping to build strength and stamina and improve balance and mobility. John makes sure that everyone does the exercises safely and simplifies the exercises if you cannot manage them.

The results speak for themselves, with participants sharing comments like:

**I can get out of my chair easier.**

**It is helping me with pain management.**

**I don't have to use my walking stick all the time** “”

The class is popular and can accommodate a maximum of 20 participants. It takes place every Tuesday at 12:30pm at Lade Court. To attend, you must book in advance (and transport if needed), as spaces are limited, and insurance requirements must be met.

If the class reaches full capacity, we can add you to the waiting list. Should there be enough interest, we will explore funding options for a second class.

To reserve your place, please call **0131 668 4247** (option 2). We look forward to welcoming you!



# LONELINESS

## It's not just a Christmas issue!

**L**oneliness is something that can affect anyone, but it is especially common as we get older. Special times, like Christmas, can really highlight how isolated some people feel. For others, that sense of loneliness is a year-round struggle, particularly if getting out and about is not as easy as it used to be.

It is worth remembering that being alone does not automatically mean someone is lonely—but not interacting with others regularly can take its toll. Surprisingly, despite how common loneliness is, it is not something people like to talk about. Many feel embarrassed or just accept it as their ‘lot in life.’

The World Health Organization has called loneliness a ‘silent killer,’ linking it to increased risks of dementia, heart attacks, strokes, and depression. Age Scotland shared a worrying statistic last December: half of over-65s in Scotland said all they wanted for Christmas was a phone call from a friend or loved one.

To tackle this, The Sunday Post teamed up with Age Scotland to launch the Big Braw Community early last year. The idea is to get our MSPs from all parties working together to address loneliness. Their first ambassador, Glen Michael—yes, the Glen Michael from Cartoon Cavalcade!—is almost 98 years old and still championing the cause.

Glen’s message is simple:

“We all know someone living on their own who can’t get out, so reach out to them. Bring them a jar of jam, or take them a cup of tea. It’ll be welcomed. I know it makes my day when that happens to me. Loneliness is the worst thing in the world—it’s awful.”

He also suggests smiling when you are out and about:

**You’ll get smiles back, and it’ll make you feel better too. “”**

These small acts of kindness can make a huge difference. So let us all do what we can, not just at Christmas, but also all year round.

### What Can You Do To Help?



Smile and say hello to people when you are out and about. It costs nothing but can brighten someone’s day.



Chat with people at the bus stop, in the supermarket queue, or while waiting for the kettle to boil at work. Talk about the weather, the price of milk, or when the next bus is due—anything to make a connection.



Invite a neighbour in for a cuppa or a chat. It does not have to be anything fancy—just spending time together matters.



Take someone to a coffee morning or local event. It might feel easier for them to go with company.



Pick up the phone. A quick call to check in can mean the world to someone who does not get many.

## More Ways to Connect

If you are feeling inspired, here are a few more ideas to help fight loneliness:

- Organize a community get-together like a potluck dinner or games night.
- Start a group activity like a book club or walking group. It is a great way to bring people together.
- Volunteer for a befriending service or local charity that supports isolated people.
- Help with technology. Show someone how to make video calls or use apps to stay in touch with family and friends.
- Celebrate the little things. Organize small gatherings for lesser-known holidays or just to mark the changing seasons.

Loneliness does not have to be a fact of life. A little effort from all of us can make a big difference.

### Links to Help and Advice for those who are feeling Lonely

Age Scotland have many resources to help including:

#### Community Connection Service

Their Community Connecting service aims to link older people across Scotland up with organisations offering friendship, social activities, health and fitness groups, and events. The possibilities for social connection and friendship are endless!

You'll be paired with a Community Connector volunteer for a period of up to three months, who will learn more about your interests via weekly phone calls - offering information, support, encouragement and a friendly chat.

If you'd like to learn more about Community Connecting, including how to get involved, please call the Age Scotland Helpline on 0800 12 44 222. [agescotland.org.uk/how-we-help/friendship/community-connecting](https://agescotland.org.uk/how-we-help/friendship/community-connecting)

## Friendship Line

*'Words matter. They give us comfort, wrap us in reassurance and help us stay connected.'*

The Age Scotland free Friendship Line service, make weekly calls of friendship, companionship and support to older people across Scotland.

*'You can call us about absolutely anything. Having a conversation can have such a positive impact and our Friendship Caller volunteers are on hand to talk about many things - from current interests, hobbies and previous work life to top-tier biscuits and time travel - the list is endless!'*

*If you'd like to learn more about the Friendship Service, including how to get involved, please call the Age Scotland Helpline on 0800 12 44 222. With Age Scotland, you are not alone.'*

### Other Resources for Older People

- **Age UK:** information and advice services for older people.  
T: 0800 678 1602 (8am – 7pm, daily)  
W: [ageuk.org.uk/services/information-advice/](https://ageuk.org.uk/services/information-advice/)
- **Independent Age:** advice, information and support for older people.  
T: 0800 319 6789 (8:30am – 6:30pm, daily)  
W: [independentage.org/get-support](https://independentage.org/get-support)
- **Re-engage:** provide social connections for older people.  
W: [reengage.org.uk/](https://reengage.org.uk/)





## LONELINESS IT'S NOT JUST A CHRISTMAS ISSUE!

- **The Cares Family:** helps people find community and connection in their local area  
W: [thecaresfamily.org.uk/](http://thecaresfamily.org.uk/)
- **The Silver Line:** provide information, friendship and support to older people  
T: 0800 4 70 80 90 (24 hours, daily)  
W: [thesilverline.org.uk/](http://thesilverline.org.uk/)

### Resources for Younger People

- **Young Minds:** practical advice and support for young people, as well as parents of young people.  
Text YM to 85258 (24 hours, daily)
- **Parents Helpline:**  
0808 802 5544 (9:30am – 4pm, Monday to Friday)  
W: [youngminds.org.uk/](http://youngminds.org.uk/)
- **Childline:** chat with a counsellor in a safe space, or get support from other young people.  
T: 0800 1111  
W: [childline.org.uk/get-support/](http://childline.org.uk/get-support/)
- **NSPCC – Building Connections:** Building Connections gives young people tools that can help them build their confidence and better equip them to manage loneliness.  
W: [learning.nspcc.org.uk/services/building-connections](http://learning.nspcc.org.uk/services/building-connections)

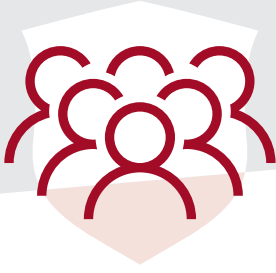
### Other Resources

- **Campaign Against Living Miserably:** support on a range of issues for anyone who needs it.  
T: 0800 58 58 58 (5pm – midnight, daily)  
W: [thecalmzone.net/help/get-help/](http://thecalmzone.net/help/get-help/)
- **Cruse Bereavement Support:** resources and one to one support if you are grieving.  
T: 0808 808 1677 (various hours, daily)  
W: [cruse.org.uk/get-support/](http://cruse.org.uk/get-support/)

- **Family Lives:** family support services offered through a helpline, live chat and email support.  
T: 0808 800 2222 (various hours, daily)  
W: [familylives.org.uk/how-we-can-help](http://familylives.org.uk/how-we-can-help)
- **Mind:** a range of information on loneliness and an information line signposting service.  
T: 0300 123 3393 (9am – 6pm, Monday to Friday)  
W: [mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk)
- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline:** a free helpline for confidential support and information on your options.  
T: 0808 2000 247  
W: [nationaldahelpline.org.uk/](http://nationaldahelpline.org.uk/)
- **Samaritans:** a free listening service for whatever you are going through.  
T: 116 123 (24 hours, daily)  
W: [samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/](http://samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/)
- **Sense:** a range of advice, support and services on disability and loneliness.  
T: 0300 330 9256 (9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday)  
W: [sense.org.uk/get-in-touch/contact-information-and-advice/](http://sense.org.uk/get-in-touch/contact-information-and-advice/)
- **SupportLine:** confidential and emotional support for people who are isolated or at risk.  
T: 01708 765 200  
W: [supportline.org.uk/](http://supportline.org.uk/)
- **The British Red Cross:** a range of resources and a dedicated helpline if you feel lonely or worried.  
T: 0808 196 3651 (10am – 6pm, daily)  
W: [redcross.org.uk/get-help](http://redcross.org.uk/get-help)



IMPORTANT



# Fire Safety in Common Areas

## Keeping Our Homes Safe Together

In our December edition of Newspoint, we shared important information about fire safety and our approach to maintaining safe communal spaces. We introduced a zero-tolerance policy regarding personal items in common areas, and since then, the housing team has been working closely with tenants to address questions and ensure everyone's safety.

While we understand that not everyone agrees with the zero-tolerance policy, we are pleased to report that it is already making a positive impact. A number of items have been removed, making our sites safer for all residents and visitors. However, we know there is more to be done to make sure this policy is fully understood and respected across all our sites.

Here is what we have achieved so far:

- **Staff Procedure:** A clear procedure has been implemented to help our team enforce the zero-tolerance policy consistently across all sites.
- **Communication with Tenants:** We now have template letters available to remind tenants to remove any personal items from communal areas.
- **Regular Inspections:** Monthly inspections of communal spaces are underway, with detailed records and photographs taken. Follow-up visits are also being made to ensure that items are properly removed.
- **Engagement with Tenants:** The housing team has been reaching out to tenants through door knocks, letters, and direct visits to address any questions or concerns.
- **Quarterly Meetings:** Our staff have attended regular meetings with tenants to continue raising awareness about fire safety and the importance of keeping shared spaces clear.

This important work will continue, and we want to remind everyone that we take the safety of our tenants seriously. Any tenant who repeatedly disregards the zero-tolerance policy may face legal action. Our priority is ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our residents.

### What is Coming Next?

We are currently working on some guidelines for the use of common rooms, and we will be consulting with tenants to ensure everyone is on the same page about what can and cannot be stored there.

Additionally, we are starting to think ahead about Christmas decorations. To keep everyone safe, our policy will allow Christmas decorations (including trees) in common rooms only, and any lights must be battery-operated. We will not be allowing external decorations, but we will keep you informed with updates well in advance of Christmas 2025.

We are aware that some remedial works are required where items have been removed such as pictures from the walls. We will be making a full assessment of what is required in the future and arrange works to improve the appearance of corridors and rooms, things like filling in holes and decoration.

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation in this matter.

# Dealing with Extreme Weather

Let's Make a Plan!



6-7 April  
2024



**Storm Kathleen** was the 11th named storm of the 2023-2024 storm season and was an unusually severe storm for this time in spring

23 August  
2024



**Storm Lilian** brought strong winds and heavy rain to England, Wales and parts of Scotland

20-21 October  
2024



**Storm Ashley** brought wet and windy weather to the UK

22-25 November  
2024



**Storm Bert** brought over 150mm of rain to some areas

6-7 December  
2024



**Storm Ashley** brought wet and windy weather to the UK

24 January  
2025



**Storm Eowyn** was the UK's most powerful windstorm for over a decade

And the list goes on and includes periods of very high temperatures or exceptional rainfall in a short period of time.

With unpredictable weather becoming more frequent, it is more important than ever to have a plan in place to keep yourself, your family, and your home safe.

Age Scotland have produced advice on making yourself ready for these emergencies. This can be found online at:

[agescotland.org.uk/information-advice/dealing-with-extreme-weather](https://agescotland.org.uk/information-advice/dealing-with-extreme-weather)

Or read on if you do not have access to the internet...

## Create Your Emergency Plan

It may be a good idea to have an emergency plan written out on paper and kept where you can easily find it. It should state what to do and who to contact in an emergency. This could be useful in a stressful situation when you may be feeling anxious or confused.

Having an emergency plan on hand can make all the difference when things go wrong. In the heat of a storm or a power outage, it can be hard to think clearly—so writing down a plan now, when things are calm, will help you stay in control.

### Your plan should include:

- **Where to turn off electricity, gas, and water** in case of an emergency.
- **Important contact numbers** such as your energy provider, emergency services, and flood updates.
- **Who to contact to let them know you are safe** after an emergency.

## Key Emergency Contacts:

- **Power outages:** Call 105 to reach your energy supplier and report a problem.
- **Gas leaks and emergencies:** call the Gas 24-hour Emergency Services Number on 0800 111 999
- **Water and wastewater emergencies:** call Scottish Water on 0800 0778 778
- **Flooding:** call the Scottish Environment Protection Agency's Floodline on 0345 988 1188 for the latest information about flooding in your area. Live updates are also available at [floodline.sepa.org.uk/floodupdates](https://floodline.sepa.org.uk/floodupdates)
- In an emergency where there is a threat to public safety: call emergency services on 999
- **Viewpoint's Office Hours Number:** 0131 668 4247
- **Viewpoint's Out of Ours Service:** 0345 604 4686

## Essential Emergency Survival Kits

In case you need to leave your home quickly, it is a good idea to keep an emergency survival kit for each person in your household. Make sure it is easily accessible (and easy to carry) and includes:

- A copy of your emergency plan.
- Small supplies of regular medications.
- Toiletries and sanitary items.
- A small first aid kit.
- High-energy foods (such as snack bars) and bottled water.
- A change of clothes.
- Spare keys, glasses, or contact lenses.
- A battery-powered or wind-up radio.
- A torch and extra batteries.
- Cash (in case of power cuts, card payments may not work).
- A spare mobile phone charger and power bank.

## Check Your Insurance

If you are a tenant, your building will be covered by Viewpoint's insurance, but it is important to make sure you have insurance for your own belongings. Having the right coverage can help protect your property in the event of storm damage or flooding.

## Alerts and Priority Services

Many energy suppliers offer a Priority Services Register for people over pension age or those with a disability or long-term health conditions. If you qualify, you will receive advance notice of service disruptions, and priority assistance if the power goes out.

You can also sign up for flood alerts through the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) at [www.floodline.sepa.org.uk](https://www.floodline.sepa.org.uk) or by calling 0345 988 1188. The Met Office provides weather warnings through their application and social media channels - make sure you are signed up for alerts.

## Stay Organised

Knowing where to find important documents can save you a lot of time and stress during an emergency. Keep a folder with your essential documents handy things like:

- Doctor's and dentist's contact details.
- Insurance policies.
- Contact information for your energy suppliers, telephone provider, and landlord.
- Any other vital information that could help you access support quickly.

## Take Action Now

Do not wait for the next storm or extreme weather event to catch you off guard. Take a few minutes to make sure you have your plan, survival kits, and important contacts in place. It will give you peace of mind and make it easier to handle any emergencies that come your way.

Stay safe, stay prepared!



# Croft-An-Righ & Canongate Kirk



**PART TWO** by Stuart Ramsay, Session Clerk, Canongate Kirk

**T**oday, Canongate Kirk is an active Church of Scotland congregation. The boundaries of the parish are broadly similar to those laid down by King David I's charter of 1128, and the kirk therefore remains The Kirk of Holyroodhouse and Edinburgh Castle. It is the parish church for the residents of Croft-an-Righ, many of whom play an active part in the life of the congregation.

On an average Sunday the church attracts approximately 70 worshippers. For those who cannot attend worship in-person, the regular Sunday morning service is livestreamed on YouTube and is available to watch online after the event. A telephone recording of the Service is also made available, allowing people to call a telephone number and listen to the Service via their telephone. In addition, every month, worship is brought to Croft-an-Righ when the Minister holds a special service for residents who wish to attend.

Recognising the offering of individuals' talents as a form of worship, members of the congregation are invited to volunteer in various ways. They are invited to welcome congregants and visitors to Services, handing-out and collecting-in hymn-books and orders-of-service, as well as giving readings from the Bible. Those with an interest in flowers are invited to provide and arrange flowers for worship, with their arrangements being proudly displayed at the front of the church for all to see and admire. Following worship, all are invited to gather in the foyer for a chat over a cup of tea or coffee, which congregational volunteers prepare and serve.

Outside of Sunday Services, the Kirk's Craft Club gathers monthly in the kirk hall to share time with each other and enjoy time sewing, knitting or crocheting. You don't need to be a member of the congregation in order to come along and share your hobbies and talents. A project shared by many in recent years has been the knitting of blankets for the Simpson Neonatal Unit at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. The Kirk is also developing a Pastoral Care Team, made up of specially trained members who will reach-out to those who are unable to come to church for whatever reason but want to stay in touch.

Beyond the boundaries of the parish, the Kirk has recently entered into a Parish Grouping with our friends at St Giles' Cathedral. As part of this arrangement, the two congregations are working more closely together, sharing expertise and ideas. One such innovation has been the introduction of a United Evening Service on the last Sunday of each month, featuring a quartet from the Cathedral Choir.



In addition, younger members of the two congregations have started a group which enables them to meet and undertake activities together.

With nearly 900 years of history behind it, Canongate Kirk is looking confidently to the future, as it continues the work that was begun all those centuries ago and has continued ever since. As the 900th Anniversary of King David's encounter with the stag approaches, it poses the question of where the next 900 years will lead. Of one thing we can be certain - the same God who looked down upon King David that day in 1128 will continue to guide and inspire us, as we seek to serve Him to the best of our abilities. To quote the words of the Hymn 'Lord in Love and Perfect Wisdom':

*“You maintain your  
ageless purpose every  
change and chance  
abovestill your holy  
Church is bearing witness  
to your changeless love”*

## Reverend Neil Gardner Honoured with Royal Award

Exciting news from Canongate Kirk!

Reverend Neil Gardner, who has served as minister at Canongate Kirk since June 2006, has been awarded the Lieutenant of the Royal Victorian Order (LVO) by the King. This distinguished honour is granted for exceptional personal service to the royal family or their representatives.

The LVO is a personal gift from the monarch, and it is wonderful to see Reverend Gardner recognised for his long-standing dedication and service. This recognition is a source of pride for the entire community, and tenants at Croft-an-Righ are delighted by the news.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Reverend Neil Gardner on this well-deserved recognition!





## NETTA WATSON'S “Surprise” Afternoon Tea



**N**etta Watson is 92 and has been a resident in St Raphael's for 8 years. She was awarded the HG Wells medal for living with type 1 diabetes for 80 years and Viewpoint wanted to celebrate this lifetime achievement with a “surprise” afternoon tea. Many of St R's residents, staff, relatives and Netta's friends gathered in January and everyone helped maintain the surprise with their fabricated stories of why they happened to be visiting her that day!

On entering the dining room to attend a “gardening club meeting”, Netta's keyboard tutor Keith played “Congratulations” on his accordion as he escorted her and everyone joined in the singing. She was clearly overwhelmed with emotion when she looked around and realised the “surprise” afternoon tea was for her! Her dear friend of many decades Susan, welcomed and introduced everyone whilst Netta sat beside all her medals in total silence to recover from the shock.

Susan explained her late mother had first met Netta at a local diabetic meeting over 65 years ago which had been the start of a long-standing friendship. She recalled how the Watson family had bought her a teddy from Jenners when she was born. As a surprise, a rather old looking Ted was reacquainted with Netta who Susan entrusted into her care - there were tears from many folk there!

Netta considers herself to be very lucky to have lived with type 1 diabetes for so long and strives to make the most of everyday of her life. She is fortunate to continue supporting her many interests in the local community and is active in every aspect of St R's life. She frequently enjoys entertaining residents, staff and others by playing her keyboard in the Viewpoint care homes. In recognition of her involvement, time and the benefit to others, Jean Gray the CEO of Viewpoint, surprised Netta by presentation her with a cheque to be given to Diabetes UK. Another surprise was a representative from Diabetes Scotland had travelled to meet Netta and accept the cheque. Netta is now the longest living type 1 diabetic in Scotland and one of only a few in the UK – she is truly an amazing example to so many people.

Susan had the honour of presenting Netta with her 80th medal and everyone raised a glass, wishing her many more years of living with type 1 diabetes. Despite feeling very emotional, Netta thanked everyone for being there and to all those involved in making the occasion so special. The last surprise arrived from the kitchen - her favourite fruit cake decorated with a medal and 80 - which was cut and distributed whilst the music and conversations continued.

Netta was so pleased to see familiar faces and everyone enjoying meeting each other from many of her different interests. She will never forget the “surprise” afternoon tea and is now planning to play her keyboard in aid of St R's and Marian House residents' funds later this year.







# Kilravock in Bloom

Gardening is more than just a hobby – it’s a way to enjoy the fresh air, get some exercise, and create something beautiful that everyone can appreciate. Over at Kilravock, Billy has been putting in a lot of hard work in the garden this past spring and summer, and the results are nothing short of amazing. But it’s not just Billy – Lorna and other residents have pitched in to help transform the garden into a stunning space.

Billy shared with us how much he loves spending time in the garden, sometimes losing track of the hours as he works. He can easily spend three hours there, and

he enjoys chatting with our landscaping contractor, picking up gardening tips and sharing his own ideas. It is clear that this garden has become a true labour of love for everyone involved.

We are thrilled with how the garden has blossomed, and we cannot wait to see what more will be achieved in the year ahead. A huge thank you to Billy, Lorna, and all of the residents who have been involved in making Kilravock’s garden such a special place. In our Autumn edition, we hope to share even more photos of the wonderful work that has been done.



## Scare Night at Buchan Gardens By Danny Rankin

Buchan Gardens hosted its annual Halloween Night on Saturday, November 2nd, drawing a lively group of 13 residents for a night of spooky fun. The event kicked off with a spirited game of horror-themed charades, sparking plenty of laughter as participants took turns acting out famous film titles in amusing and inventive ways.

Attendees enjoyed a selection of snacks, along with tea and coffee to keep warm and refreshed. The night continued with music, adding to the festive atmosphere and keeping everyone entertained well into the wee hours. It was another successful and memorable weekend activity, bringing together residents for an evening of shared fun and laughter.





# Santa, Songs and Smiles

## Woodlands Nursery Visit Buchan Gardens

Buchan Gardens had our annual visit from the children of our local Woodlands Nursery. Once a year we always look forward to the children singing Christmas carols for us. This year was no exception. We were entertained with their singing and were asked to join in. We had a great turnout from our residents who happily sang along with the children.

The children were asked to sing 'Jingle Bells' and half way through the song, who should appear but Santa Clause himself. It was none other than our very own John Muir, who has been growing his beard these past few months so he would really look the part.



The children were so excited that they started to sing even louder to welcome him.

Once Santa was settled into his own special chair, the children were asked what they wanted for Christmas. It was such a joy to see their little faces light up as they chatted away. Once everyone has shared their wishes, Santa handed out presents to each of them. Before he left Santa asked if they could sing his favourite song – 'Jingle Bells' - and they were more than happy to oblige.

After all the excitement, the children enjoyed a wee snack of crisps and juice before saying their goodbyes to all our residents. We look forward to seeing them all again next year.

## Christmas Lunch at Buchan Gardens By Danny Rankin

This year's Annual Christmas Lunch was another big success, held at the lovely Victoria Hotel in Kirkcaldy. We were thrilled to see such a great turnout—the biggest we have had so far—with most of us making our way there in our own cars.

The venue was perfect, with a beautiful private room just for us. Everyone had the chance to pick their meals from an excellent menu that had been sent out in advance, so people had the chance to pick what they wanted. The food was absolutely delicious and it was clear everyone enjoyed it.

After lunch, many of us went back to our communal hall to watch the grand finale of Strictly Come Dancing on the big screen. It was a real treat and such a fun way to wind down. But the day did not

end there! We stayed behind for a good old-fashioned chinwag, chatting and laughing until the early hours.

It really was a fantastic day, full of good food, great company, and plenty of festive spirit. We are already looking forward to doing it all again next year!



## “The Best Laid Schemes o’ Mice an’ Men”

### A Burns Night to Remember at Buchan Gardens By Danny Rankin

Buchan Gardens held their annual Burns Supper in their own communal hall, where we were delighted to welcome 28 people. Everyone gathered around for a traditional meal of haggis, neeps and tatties, followed by a selection of sweet treats: Cranachan, Cheesecake, Chocolate Cake and Red Velvet Cake, all services with a dollop of cream.

Dany gave a recitation of ‘To A Haggis’ and the hall was decorated with a festive display of tartan and Saltire flags, setting the perfect atmosphere for the occasion.



Entertainment for the night was provided by our local group, ‘Buttons and Bows’ who have performed for us in previous years and never disappoint. With five accordions, two violins, and an flute, the group played a wonderful selection of Scottish and Robbie Burns songs, with everyone joining in the singing. Danny also sang ‘The Northern Lights of Old Aberdeen’, a song his father had sung to him as a child.

It was truly a night to remember, filled with laughter, music and camaraderie. A great time was had by all in celebration of Scotland’s cherished poet.



## £850 raised by City Park Crafters for Charity

City Park held their annual craft sale, with all the goods made by the talented crafters living at City Park. Year on year the craft group surpass themselves and this year was no exception, as they raised a remarkable £850 for charity!

The funds raised are for TCCL Lodge (Tayside and NE Fife Children with Cancer and Leukaemia) who have a holiday home in St Andrews, where the families of children with cancer or leukaemia can come for a holiday. The lodge is a detached bungalow and is fully equipped with everything the families may need in terms of managing the health of their child during their stay.

Here is a photograph of the crafters presenting the cheque to TCCL along with pictures of the beautiful



crafts that were available on sale. The crafters were (from left to right) Alan, Chrissie, Elizabeth Logan (the Manager of TCCL Lodge), Pam, Sonja and Mary. Helen was also part of this group but was not available when the presentation was made.

Well done to the City Park Crafters for their hard work and generosity – it is an incredible achievement

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