

## TENTH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



Tenant Volunteers Chair George Pickering and Vice-chair Pauline Seaward

Berwickshire Housing Association's Tenant Volunteers are extremely proud to be celebrating their 10th birthday this month.

All staff joined the group for a buffet lunch where there were some surprise presentations to the members and the two former chairs.

Group Chair George Pickering said: "I am proud to say that I have been Chair of the Tenant Volunteers for the past five years, and honoured to be here in this their 10th anniversary year. We are a small but passionate group of volunteers who continue to work to express the views of BHA tenants and are always looking for interested tenants to come forward and be part of the group."

Kimberley Hoddinott, Tenant Communication Officer at BHA added: "I've worked alongside the Volunteers since they first met and I am proud that they have achieved this milestone. Acting as critical friends of the Association they have a great respect for BHA, its staff and the work they do and BHA appreciate the commitment and time they give up freely to be a part of the group."



# WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER UPDATE

After what has felt like a very long cold winter, the swallows are finally returning and we are hoping they are bringing us some sun!

We will be starting to get out and about in the communities with our 'Teapot on Tour' events during the summer months and welcome any of you who come and find us. We continue to seek solutions for problems you encounter in your home and we want to hear what those problems are.

We have recently started new innovation projects tackling problems that tenants have brought to our attention including noisy dogs and



Helen Forsyth, Chief Executive

untidy gardens and we seek to find new and improved solutions to support you all.

This bulletin is bursting with our work and the community activities we are involved in and we hope you will find it interesting and helpful. An excellent Berwickshire summer to you all!

Warmest Regards

Helen Forsyth, Chief Executive

## A BEFRIENDING PROJECT FOR OLDER PEOPLE

BeFriend is a Big Lottery funded voluntary befriending project for older people (over 55) living in both the Berwickshire and Kelso areas.

Our volunteers visit older people who are lonely and isolated. They provide someone to chat to, someone to go out for a coffee with, or someone to walk round the park with.

Both the older people we visit and our volunteers say that they really feel the benefit of the visits, both in their mental and physical wellbeing.

As well as one-to-one befriending, BeFriend also offers a limited number of places in befriending groups, in Kelso, Coldstream and Duns.

The groups meet to chat, take part in a variety of activities, and eat cake! There will also be a new group for older people who identify as LGBT+ starting this year.

Much of the project's time this year has been dedicated to taking part in quality assurance schemes.

In February, we gained the Volunteer Friendly Award, adjudicated by Volunteer Centre Borders.

In May, we achieved the prestigious Approved Provider Standard with the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation.

These quality standards are used to assure referral agencies, volunteers and

the people who use our project, that they are receiving the highest levels of service.

Befriending volunteers come from all walks of life - we have factory workers, unemployed people, retired nurses, ex-carers, civil servants, retired barmaids - and this reflects the variety of people who apply to receive the service.

Could you give a couple of hours a week to bring some variety, companionship, and interest into the life of a lonely and isolated older person, or could you help out at befriending groups?

Get in touch with either Terri or Kerry if you are interested in the project or have any questions.

You can telephone us on 01361 884000 or email [befriend@berwickshirehousing.org.uk](mailto:befriend@berwickshirehousing.org.uk).

# HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE



Dust off those garden tools

## Estates

At our recent tenant satisfaction survey events you all agreed that estates and communities look more inviting and a pleasant area to live in when tidy.

Gardens play a large part in this and it is your responsibility to ensure yours is tidy - dust off those garden tools and get in to your garden, you will get a great sense of satisfaction and some fresh air to boot!

If your not green-fingered simply keeping the grass maintained and the weeds at bay is totally acceptable. No tools? Maybe a neighbour or friend could lend you some equipment?

Rubbish also plays a big part in keeping an area attractive. Please remember to put your bin out for collection.

We do carry out skip and scrap days on a rolling basis around Berwickshire, however, we don't have a huge budget for this as rubbish is collected by the local authority.

We will publish a rolling programme for skip and scrap very soon and if your town or village isn't listed in the near future then please ensure large items are taken to the recycling centre or tip local to you. If you don't have transport SBC can arrange an uplift for a fee.

## Tenant satisfaction survey

Each year we must carry out a satisfaction survey to feedback to the Scottish Housing Regulator. The response rate is never that high and we have tried various methods to raise the returns.

This costs money and that money comes from the rent you pay so this year we decided to take a different approach and try and 'give you back' some of that money by giving you a free chippy supper in return for filling the form in and bringing it with you to one of our four venues.

Feedback was very positive and we have improved in performance in nearly all areas of satisfaction which is great.

We are planning a summer event – maybe with ice cream this time around!

## Downsizing

We are still running our downsizing scheme. Do you have a spare bedroom or two? Are you finding it harder to manage or is heating your home becoming too much? Talk to us about downsizing, we will pay you £500 per spare room and help move white goods. Conditions do apply. For further information please call us on 01361 884000.

## Borders Choice Homes

Currently we work in partnership to deliver our allocations with Eildon Housing Association under the brand of Borders Choice Homes.

We have reviewed this partnership following the exit of another partner and feel we can provide the service in-house at a more affordable cost.

Applicants will still apply for housing via choice base lettings but this will simply be branded as BHA. More details will follow and all current applicants will be contacted. If you have any queries about how to apply for housing then please talk to your local office and we can advise you.

## Community giving

Our Housing Officers have been giving something back within our communities. Each Officer has a small budget to donate within the area they manage for worthy projects or organisations which benefit the area they operate in.

For example we have donated money for Hi Viz jackets and bags for paperboys and girls, funding towards community run flower beds, granted money to a Guide group to enable trips, gave a donation to the Berwickshire branch of Riding for the Disabled and funded two pop up Police Officers to assist with speeding in areas of concern.

## Contact us first!

We completely understand that some of you get frustrated if things aren't getting done!

You do, of course, have every right to contact your local councillor, MP, however, this doesn't mean anything will be done any quicker.

The quickest way to get an answer is to speak to a member of BHA staff and we will deal with the issue. Our systems record contact so we can track when repairs were reported or if someone called in to speak to someone.

If something isn't getting done please tell us first and we will work with you face to face.

# THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE WIND



The Fisherman Three Wind Farm has exceeded expectations in its first year

Berwickshire's innovative and award-winning Fisherman Three Wind Farm, has exceeded all expectations in its first year of operation.

The wind farm at Hoprigshiels, near Cockburnspath, generated 24,052MWh in the past year and has also provided an initial community benefit payment of £37,500 which will go to the communities closest to the wind farm site, to be spent on whatever they identify as their priorities.

The three turbine scheme is a joint venture between Berwickshire Housing Association (BHA) and Community Energy Scotland (CES). By supplying energy to the National Grid, the wind farm will create revenue for BHA of around £20 million over the next 25 years – enough to allow them to build 500 new homes over that period.

Jamie Adam, Project Manager, said: "We're really pleased to have generated

over 24 million units of electricity in the first year of operation for the Fisherman Three - enough to boil a full kettle about 106 million times!

"This is almost exactly how we expected the site to perform and it's really exciting to see the turbines working so well. The amount of energy they've produced is equivalent to the annual energy needs of 7,758 homes according to Ofgem figures, which means it's powering the equivalent of all the BHA homes, and a further 6,000 households in the area.

"By helping to push gas and coal-fired power stations off-line it has saved over 6,100 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions so far.

"We're also delighted to have made our first community benefit payments, totalling £37,500, to Cockburnspath and Cove Community Council

and Oldhamstocks Community Association. Both organisations do great work supporting local good causes and it's hoped that some of the funds distributed this year will go towards a new village hall planned in Oldhamstocks."

BHA's Chief Executive Helen Forsyth added: "This has been a very good first year for us. It has been fascinating learning about the running of the wind farm and we are very upbeat about the future and the income we will be able to put back into the communities."

Nicholas Gubbins, Chief Executive of CES, said: "We are delighted with the performance of the wind farm which has exceeded the forecast for its first year and is on course to make an important financial contribution to helping Scottish communities address their energy issues."

# SPOTLIGHT ON NEW TENANT VOLUNTEER – ALUN PEATE

Alun Peate and his guide dog companion Yogi are the newest members of the tenant volunteers group here at Berwickshire Housing Association.

Alun and Yogi enjoy living in Coldstream where they go everywhere together enjoying the local community in which they live. Having worked in health, homelessness, housing and social services both in this country and in Florida, Alun has gained a broad range of knowledge and understanding of these subjects over the years.

Alun explains the reasons for joining the tenant volunteers group :

“Over the years I have had a great deal of support from different agencies and organisations, which has made my life much easier and manageable. It taught me that nobody knows better than me about what I need. Of course, this meant I had to get involved in the planning and provision of services.

“When I first moved into my property in Coldstream my housing officer told me about the tenant volunteer group and following the last newsletter it made me want to give it a go. I went along to the first meeting and I was pleasantly surprised. Both staff from the Association and tenants having a worthwhile conversation looking at the wider strategic issues, exchanging ideas and listening to each other. It is a great example of staff and tenants being involved in decision making.

“Having been there a few months I am now getting into the swing of it and am fully involved in the meetings. Having lived in countries that do not have, or have very little access to social housing, I really do appreciate the importance of accessible and affordable housing for those that need it.



Alun and his guide dog Yogi

“The most valuable thing I have is my knowledge and time and I would like to see the services continue to get better and it is a great opportunity to be involved.

“Does the guide dog get a vote? – No but I certainly do..... and Yogi is on Twitter!”

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PRIZE DRAW WINNERS

Repair Satisfaction Returns, each winning £50 -

Mr Scott, Coldstream  
Miss Anderson, Preston  
Mr and Mrs Mann, Swinton  
Mrs Waddell, Duns

2018/19 Rent Consultation Returns each winning £25 Love to Shop vouchers -

Mrs Rudden, Eyemouth  
Mrs McIntosh, Duns  
Mr and Mrs Kerr, Hutton

# DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

## Acredale

The construction of the 30 new houses and flats by Hart Builders Ltd in Eyemouth is progressing well and we are still hoping for handover in November this year.

Due to the size of the scheme the properties will be handed over in phases as they become complete and have gained all the necessary local authority completion certificates.

The properties are: 13 two-bedroom four person houses; 11 three-bedroom six person houses; four one-bedroom two person flats and two three-bedroom five person wheelchair flats.

You will have to get used to some new street names as well as they will have the names of Nisbet Avenue, Dow Drive and Willis Way.

The properties are all highly insulated, have high performance windows and doors and all benefit from the latest in



Operations director Jean Gray gets the work at Chirnside officially underway



Work is progressing well at Acredale, Eyemouth

heating with PV panels. We are hopeful that the new occupants will find them warm and very economical to heat.

All the houses comply with Housing for Varying Needs, which means that the design has taken into account the future changing needs of the occupants.

In visible terms you will notice that they have level access footpaths with no steps that allow wheelchair users or people with walking impairment easy access to the property, and all the light switches and sockets are positioned to provide ease of use.

The wheelchair flats comply with a more stringent set of criteria in terms of access and space standards and also include a wheelchair friendly designed kitchen and specialist kitchen units.

Once complete the houses will be advertised on the BHA website, at the local Duns and Eyemouth offices and in the local newspaper.

Please remember to apply for the houses in order of your preference.

# DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

## Chirnside

Works have now started on site at Chirnside and it is hoped that they will be completed in spring of next year.

Following the success of our new houses in Duns, at Todlaw, we have again used the same design team headed up by our architects Smith Scott Mullen and main contractor, Harts Builders Ltd.

We are adding two new homes at our site in Erskine Place and creating 23 units in what will become Glebe Place which is accessed from The Glebe.

There will be 18 houses and seven flats, one of which is a five person wheelchair property.

## Todlaw

Berwickshire Housing Association has recently applied for planning permission to build a further 27 homes in Duns next to our recently completed properties at Todlaw.

We have to wait until the planning process is complete before finalising any programme, but we are hopeful that we could be on site later this year.



The new Chirnside development is underway

## WHAT ARE BHA RESPONSIBILITIES?

We are responsible for many internal and some external aspects of your home. If you are unsure then please refer to section 6 of your tenant handbook, where there is a comprehensive list of our responsibilities.

If you are still unsure then please contact our Head Office on 01361 884000 and a member of the team will be able to advise you.

## WHAT ARE SBC RESPONSIBILITIES?

- Roads and Footpaths
- Pot Holes
- Dog Fouling
- Communal Areas inc parks & verges

If you have any issues with the above it is easy to report by calling

**0300 100 1800**

or log onto [www.scotborders.gov.uk](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk)  
click on "Report" then follow the instructions.

# TECHNICAL SERVICES UPDATE

Energy Efficiency surveys have been completed on the poor performing homes and Berwickshire Housing Association is currently procuring a contractor to undertake the upgrade works. The contract will be delivered over the next couple of years to ensure compliance with the standard by December 2020. GEP Environmental will be carrying out this work, surveying all stock which currently fails the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH).

Sidey Ltd have completed the first phase of works to replace windows in Grantshouse, Eyemouth, Coldingham and Burnmouth with UPVC. Sidey and BHA have now commenced works to identify and survey the next phase of the replacement contract with a start date within the next six weeks. Feedback from tenants involved in the first phase of the works was very positive.

L&D Plumbing Services, who are our kitchen installer for the next three years, have commenced works to replace around 114 kitchens over the coming months. The first phase of these were installed in Eyemouth and we have now started working with our surveyors to commence the next phase of the works.

Local electrical contractor RM Markby, who was successful in securing the contract for the fire detection upgrade works, has recently completed the work fitting our new systems at Albert Road in Eyemouth. In addition to this he will work alongside Telecare installers to replace the obsolete systems and door entry systems. Works to upgrade the fire detection systems at Station Court, Duns, are also due to start as is the installation a new Telecare system to ensure our tenants in these homes remain safe and secure.

Following a more detailed and robust specification prepared by our design team's landscape architect, our Landscape contract has been awarded to Nurture Landscapes Ltd for the next three years. Watch for some of our sites being upgraded throughout Berwickshire to create a better environment within some of our schemes and streets.

Customer Services and Corporate Services have recently tendered and awarded a joint cleaning contract covering our offices, void properties and common areas within our stock to Confida FM. We are currently in discussions with Confida FM to finalise our requirements prior to works commencing at sites later this summer.

Technical Services are currently identifying fifty properties suitable for installing Sun-Amp batteries to assist tenants with fuel poverty issues. These systems have the ability to store energy from Photovoltaic Panels or energy purchased on cheaper rate tariffs to then be used at a more convenient time. These batteries will be installed by one of our repairs contractors who are approved by Sun-Amp. We are currently sourcing funding grants from the Scottish Government to allow us to install more of these systems throughout our stock.

The 2018 painter works contracts have been awarded to the Bell Group and Novus Property Solutions who have been successful contractors in previous years. The work is split into three contracts and covers stock throughout Berwickshire.

# DUNS JUNIORS FC SCORE!

Duns Junior Football Club scored with the very first local Supplier Community Grant awarded by Berwickshire Housing Association (BHA) as part of its current contract with Novus Property Solutions.

The grant has resulted in the club's changing facilities at their Gavinton pitch getting a premier upgrade with new paintwork throughout.

Duns JFC Chairperson Richard Dobson said: "Novus offered not only to paint inside and outside, but also carry out some repairs to the building, which we were amazed at. Dulux supplied all the paint.

"We are all very impressed at the quality of the work done. Externally the timber clad walls look like new and inside there has been a much needed improvement, thanks to the fresh paintwork, but also the patchwork ceilings have been over-boarded and look great.

"As a small club, which has grown in size over the past few years to having over 100 children playing, we rely solely on volunteers and numerous fundraising activities to allow the club to run. Without the help of BHA we would never have been able to transform our changing rooms like this."



BHA's Technical Team Leader Derek Szzoneberg (back row, right) with representatives of Novus and BHA who helped carry out the work

# LOCAL BUSINESS WINS CONTRACT



Left to right are Dave Gray (BHA Technical Services Manager), Barry Mather (Aico Ltd) and Bob Markby

Berwickshire Housing Association has announced that Duns electrician Bob Markby has secured a contract, valued at £211,000, to fit Aico Fire Detection Systems in its properties.

David Gray, Technical Services Manager at BHA, said: "There is a general concern that with the tightening of procurement regulations small local contractors will miss out on these opportunities against some of the bigger national companies. This award shows that's not the case."

The multi-sensor fire alarm contains two sensor types, optical and heat, to constantly monitor smoke and heat levels, sending and receiving information via its intelligent detection software. This information alters the alarm's sensitivity, automatically providing the best response to all fire types and reduces potential false alarms.

Multi-sensors will be installed in the main living area and will be replacing optical and ionisation alarms on exit routes. This will be rolled out to all BHA's housing stock over time.

# UNIVERSAL CREDIT FULL SERVICE



On June 13, 2018, Universal Credit will be rolled out in the Scottish Borders with the exception of TD12 and TD15 postcodes which will start from November 2018

## Who can claim?

Claims can be taken from anyone of working age including families with children, people with health conditions and people who are in work. It will no longer be possible to make new claims to pre-existing benefits such as income support, income based jobseekers allowance or income related employment and support allowance. Some new claims for housing benefit, child tax credits and working tax credits can still be made but only in limited circumstances.

## Will I be better off on Universal Credit?

Some people, especially those in work, could be better off under Universal Credit but there are many people who will not. Disabled people in receipt of PIP or DLA run the risk of being worse off and they should seek advice before making a claim. There will be some transitional protection for those receiving disability benefits if they wait until they are transferred over to Universal Credit but NOT if they make a new claim before then.

## How do I make a claim?

In most cases claims are made online using a computer, tablet or smartphone, only in exceptional circumstances can a claim be made by telephone. Everything you need to know is available from [www.gov.uk/universalcredit](http://www.gov.uk/universalcredit). You will create an online account with a journal to keep track of your claim and use this journal to report any changes in circumstances and report on your agreed action plans. If you are at all worried about using a computer, tablet or smartphone, the libraries offer basic computer skills courses throughout the year. You can ask for help with making your claim from the Jobcentre, Libraries, Citizens Advice Bureau and BHA. If you don't have wi-fi but have a smartphone or tablet you can go along to these offices and make your claim using their free wi-fi.

## How will I get paid?

Universal Credit is a monthly payment and you will receive your first payment into your bank account by the sixth week of

claiming. If you won't have enough money to last this length of time you can apply for an advance payment of Universal Credit which you will pay back over the following 12 months. Many people will be worried about managing their money monthly, if you feel you need some help with budgeting you can contact the Citizens Advice Bureau, Scottish Borders Council's Customer Advice and Support Services or BHA's Financial Inclusion Team.

## How do I pay my rent?

If you are currently receiving Housing Benefit, you will continue to have this paid for the first two weeks after you claim Universal Credit. Your first Universal Credit payment will include any housing costs (rent) you are entitled to and it is your responsibility to ensure this amount is paid to BHA. You can ask for the housing costs element to be paid directly to us but this will only take effect from the second month. There are various ways you can pay your rent and your Customer Accounts Officer at BHA will be happy to discuss a payment method which is right for you.

## I am already on the Live Service, how do I transfer to Full Service?

For people currently receiving Universal Credit on the Live Service, you will be called to the Jobcentre to get your claim transferred to the Full Service from September 2018. It is important that you don't try to switch over before this as it could affect your assessment period and pay date and result in an overpayment.

## Where can I get help and advice about Universal Credit?

Frontline staff at BHA have received training on Universal Credit and will be happy to talk you through the claiming process. For more in depth advice and assistance our Financial Inclusion Team can discuss and queries and options or help you to resolve problems. You can also get help and advice from Scottish Borders Council's Customer Advice and Support Services and Citizens Advice Bureau.



# YOUNGSTERS VISIT COURT RESIDENTS

Staff and pupils from Duns Primary School have visited Boston Court in Duns over three sessions.

Inspired by a television programme involving primary school children visiting elderly folks, with the aim of forging links between generations in a positive and sustainable way, the group of around ten children, aged between five and twelve, visited Boston Court and engaged with the tenants by talking about their school experiences, making decorative plates, going for short walks in Duns Public Park and generally getting to know one another.

A brilliant time was had by both the tenants and the children.

Sandra Brodie, Support for Learning teacher at Duns Primary School, explained: "The pupils take part in craft activities and enjoy an informal chat with the residents.

"The children are keen to attempt a walk around the park (and a play at the swings), weather permitting, so we might do that too with those residents who feel up to it."

Independent Living supervisor Louise Anderson added: "What a brilliant time we have had – really enjoyed by tenants and children."

Eyemouth's Linkim Court has also been receiving visits from children who attend the Highway Nursery in the town.

The young visitors are a group of four-year-olds who spend an hour with the tenants doing small projects like Easter egg biscuit decorating.



Duns Primary School pupils and Boston Court residents enjoyed the visits



Both pupils and Boston Court residents enjoyed a range of activities during their time together



Youngsters from Highway Nursery in Eyemouth make decorated Easter biscuits at Linkim Court

# SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY



## Station Court Defibrillator

Berwickshire Housing Association, along with Hart Builders, has been instrumental in helping make the defibrillator at Station Court in Duns available to the wider community.

Rachel Fourie, Regional Manager for Community Integrated Care (CIC) explained: "We have been very fortunate at Station Court in receiving the kind donation of a box to allow us to put our defibrillator outside the main building allowing the wider community to access it.

"Hart Builders were keen to acknowledge our service and the good communication we maintained with them during recent works they were carrying out in the street which involved pipe laying and the restriction of the water supply at times.

"Carolyn Veitch, our housing officer with BHA, was really supportive in taking things forward and securing our donation so a huge thanks to her."



## Coldstream Brownies

Coldstream's Rainbows, Brownies and Guides are looking forward to trips away after receiving a grant of £400 from Berwickshire Housing Association's Housing Officer Gina Gordon, from the Community Initiative Fund.

The Association introduced this fund which allows housing officers to make awards to local groups or causes.

Elizabeth Reid, Guide Leader and South District Commissioner explained that the money is actually going to benefit about 55

girls in Coldstream spanning the ages from five to fourteen.

She added: "Transport is such a big cost when we want to take the girls on a trip. The Rainbows intend using their share for a bus to take the girls to East Links Family Park and the Brownies went to Alnwick Castle to start their Harry Potter adventure which will continue in June at their Pack Holiday.

"The Guides are hoping to use their share either for extra camping equipment or during their camp when they have an adventurous activity which normally would not be financially viable without it being subsidised



## Skip and Scrap

Berwickshire Housing Association have been continuing to deliver their popular 'Skip and Scrap' events.

The aim is to help keep housing estates looking tidy and give those with no access to their local recycling centres the chance to have a clear out. Station Court and Earlsmeadow in Duns were the latest to be visited.

Association Housing Officer Carolyn Veitch, said: "Once again the event was a great success. We managed to fill two skips in the morning and another two in the afternoon."

## Teapot on Tour

Following the success of the 'Teapot on Tour' last summer, we are pleased to announce that it will be making a return to events throughout the Berwickshire region this summer.

The 'Teapot on Tour' events provide an opportunity to chat with our staff whilst enjoying some refreshments for a small donation which is given back to the local communities.

After being at Chirnside Civic Week on May 27, we will be at the following events:

Greenlaw Festival – TBC; Berwickshire County Show, Duns – Saturday, August 4; Eyemouth Twilight Run – Friday, August 24; Silver Sunday in Duns Volunteer Hall - Sunday, October 7; Coldstream Poppy Project – November.

# IT'S TIME TO GET CLEAR ON PERSONAL DATA

Your personal data is unique to you and whilst we've always been careful to keep it safe, it makes sense that you should have control over it as well.

A new law came into effect on Friday, May 25, 2018, which will give you more clarity over how your personal information is managed. It's called the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and will replace the existing Data Protection Act.

The new rules mean that we, like other businesses in the UK, will be making sure that we are even clearer about how we handle your data.

You should have received a letter and our fair processing notice from us already but if you haven't please call us on 01361 884000.



# APPRENTICES TAKE UP CHALLENGE

In April, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) held an event to focus solely on Housing Apprenticeships.

Employers and apprentices from across Scotland attended and explored how the housing sector can invest in young people and why it is vital to do so.

The social housing sector in Scotland has a high percentage of workers over the age of 55 and a low percentage of 16-24 year olds. Clearly, this could lead to a future skills gap and the Minister for Employability and Training Jamie Hepburn MSP, gave a keynote speech detailing the government's work on apprenticeships.

Presentations were also given by apprentices who explained the positive impact their apprenticeships have had.

Current housing apprentice employers talked about their own experiences, and organisations such as Skills Development Scotland explained how they can assist housing associations that would like to employ apprentices.



The apprentices with their certificates after completing the SFHA Apprentice Challenge

The event included the SFHA's Apprentice Challenge and Berwickshire Housing Association was represented by our two apprentices, Katie Young and Charley Hall.

Katie and Charley met other apprentices from across Scotland and worked together to produce a presentation which aimed to find solutions to common issues in the social housing sector.

Tasks included thinking about how the sector can help make life easier for, and meet the needs of, disabled tenants and focussing on helping young people to stay in their tenancies.

It was an opportunity to meet apprentices from across Scotland, and find out about their experiences in the social housing sector and the various challenges which the sector currently faces.

# YOUR SCRUTINY PANEL NEEDS YOU



## What is the role of the Panel?

The Panel identify and take an in-depth look at a key service area and the way it is provided and delivered within the Association, giving feedback and possible suggestions where improvements might be needed.

## What is involved?

As a member of the Panel you will work alongside our staff and get to know about the services we provide. You will talk to staff, managers and tenants to understand how services are delivered and make recommendations to our Trustees and Leadership Team on improvements to the services.

## How is the panel made up?

There are approximately 10 representatives on the Panel. These are predominantly made up of tenants, and also include a small number of Berwickshire Housing Association staff.

Training will be provided and you will be fully supported in the

role. All Panel members work on a voluntary basis, specific expenses will be reimbursed.

We strongly support the idea of Tenant Scrutiny and although we already encourage all of our tenants to get involved, this offers tenants a new way to engage with us. It is important that the Association is evaluated at a local level to ensure customers key concerns are addressed and prioritised, and we are keen to find the right people to help us do this.

You can also be involved by becoming an armchair critic, being asked to review areas of the business or forms then feedback your thoughts from the comfort of your own home or become an ad hoc Tenant Volunteer for particular focus group sessions.

If you are interested and would like to know more, then please contact the office on 01361 884000 or email [info@berwickshirehousing.org.uk](mailto:info@berwickshirehousing.org.uk)

## OUR POWER - MAKING ENERGY FAIRER

### Who are Our Power?

Our Power are a not-for-profit energy supplier, set up by progressive Scottish social housing providers to make energy fairer and reduce levels of fuel poverty.

They aim to offer more affordable energy, excellent customer service and never charge exit fees, so you're always in complete control.

Our Power currently has 58 housing associations and local authorities as members, including Berwickshire Housing.

### Tariffs

Everyone can switch to Our Power, not just social housing tenants, and they offer three simple tariffs to choose from:

#### Our +IMPACT Tariff

IMPACT is Our Power's 100% green electricity tariff. On average customers will benefit from annual savings of around £80\*, compared with big six standard variable tariff. All money raised through +IMPACT won't be handed to shareholders but will be reinvested in communities that need it most. This tariff is also available to customers on E7 and E10 tariffs.

#### Our Best Energy Tariff

This is Our Power's lowest-cost tariff. With Our Best they offer one fair price for all customers – whether you choose Pay As You Go or Direct Debit. This tariff also offers great rates for customers on E7 and E10 tariffs.

#### Our Take Control Tariff

Their Take Control tariff has been specially designed for customers previously stuck on restricted meters, such as Total Heat Total Control in North Scotland or ComfortPlus in South Scotland.

As part of their mission to make energy fairer, Our Power has priced their Take Control tariff to offer great rates that we believe could make a real difference to your energy bills.

You can find out more about Our Power's tariffs and make the switch to a fairer supplier by visiting [our-power.co.uk](http://our-power.co.uk) or by calling 0808 189 3085.

\*based on +IMPACT dual fuel rate with a consumption of 3100kwh electric and 12000kwh gas

\*\*based on the average saving in days that could be generated for direct debit and pre pay customers currently paying for gas on a big six standard variable tariff (54 days)

# SEA THE CHANGE AND GET OUTDOORS!

## What is Sea the Change?

Sea the Change is a new Social Enterprise based in Eyemouth that strives to help create happier, healthier, more sustainable communities. They want to encourage our whole community to get outdoors, connect with others, and make some small changes to reduce our environment impact.

## Why do they think this is important?

Spending time in a natural environment and feeling connected to your community can have a significant impact on your health; connected people are better equipped to look after the place where they live and their environment, they become happier, and when people are happier, they have a greater sense of purpose and meaning and are more likely to serve their community. Building connections within the local community can help transform social isolation into social capital, and Sea the Change want to create new opportunities and activities for all.

## What do they do?

With the support of BHA, Sea of Change plan to run a community beach school for all and deliver activities for children - giving

them the opportunity to learn and develop naturally, developing empathy toward others and the environment. They believe that every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances.

However, their project is for our whole community and their adult "Sea Happiness sessions" are aimed at people of all ages. These sessions will focus on fostering positive mental health, happiness and on little changes we can all do to make life better. The group will also be getting involved in local community events and activities that will focus on nurturing our community, promoting environmental awareness and building connections – lots to do!

## Get involved

Sea the Change would love to have you onboard to help them develop this project further, so please get in touch! Find Sea the Change on Facebook or visit [www.seathechange.org.uk](http://www.seathechange.org.uk). Email them at: [juliana@seathechange.org.uk](mailto:juliana@seathechange.org.uk) or [alice@seathechange.org.uk](mailto:alice@seathechange.org.uk)

# KEEP IN TOUCH



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

There are many ways to contact us:

Pop into one of our local offices at  
55 Newtown Street, Duns TD11 3AU  
or 38 Church Street, Eyemouth TD14 5DH

 Find us on Facebook  
[/BHAThrivingCommunities](https://www.facebook.com/BHAThrivingCommunities)

 Follow us on Twitter  
[@BHACommunities](https://twitter.com/BHACommunities)

 Write to us at BHA,  
55 Newtown Street, Duns, TD11 3AU

 Telephone us on 01361 884000

 Email us at  
[info@berwickshirehousing.org.uk](mailto:info@berwickshirehousing.org.uk)

 Visit our website at  
[www.berwickshirehousing.org.uk](http://www.berwickshirehousing.org.uk)

## OUT OF HOURS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAY EMERGENCY REPAIRS

If you have an emergency please contact the following numbers:

- If you need to report an emergency repair call our repairs hotline on **0800 652 8104**
- If you have problems with your gas or solid fuel heating system call Dalex on **0800 038 5599**
- To report a power cut call Scottish Power on **105**
- If you smell gas in your home call Transco for help and advice on **0800 111 999**

Our offices will be closed on Monday, August 27, for the Summer Bank Holiday