



Coronavirus: How we can help

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almond HOUSING ASSOCIATION



After 41 years – George is retiring

Almond CEO George Webster's retirement plans.... more on page 3

Coronavirus

The Coronavirus pandemic has been a challenging time for all, and we have changed the way we work so that we can provide as many services as possible.

Following government recommendations, our office in Craigshill continues to stay closed to the public and our staff are working from home. There are limits to the services we can provide, and we have had to stop the following:

- Garden-aid scheme
- Non-essential inspections
- Stair inspections
- Non-emergency repairs
- Reletting of housing (except in homeless circumstances)
- Planned works including smoke detector contracts, replacement fencing, paint works and rendering

As we have had to stop stair inspections, all tenants are reminded not to store anything in the close for the safety of themselves and others in the building.

For tenant safety, we are continuing our gas servicing and emergency repairs. Tenants are asked to allow access as much as possible, however anyone self-isolating or shielding should contact us in the first instance.

All services will resume to normal as soon as it is safe to do so. We are committed to helping all our tenants during this pandemic and have various forms of support in place to help during this time, including:

SUPPORT WITH YOUR FINANCES

Our Welfare Benefits Advisor Drew McLellan can help with benefit claims, universal credit, debt-related matters and much more.



Drew McLellan

SUPPORT WITH YOUR TENANCY

Our Tenancy Sustainment Officer Laura McGinty can help with accessing health, education, training and employment services, applying for support, managing household tasks and much more.



Laura McGinty

HELP FROM YOUR COMMUNITY

We are working with community groups to help our tenants in different ways. There are groups delivering hot meals, food parcels, activity packs and much more to tenants' doors.



Food parcel

For more information and to get support during this time, please contact us on **01506 439291** email enquiries@almondha.org.uk or visit www.almondha.org.uk/coronavirus

We will continue to follow advice from the Government, and we will update all tenants on our plans to reopen the office in due course. Please look out for a letter in the post or check our website for further updates.

George is retiring

"After 41 rewarding years working for the people of Livingston, it is time to look for the next CEO of Almond Housing Association.

I began working for Livingston Development Corporation in 1979 before becoming part of the team who opened Almond Housing Association in 1994. We formed Almond HA because we believed the services that tenants were receiving could be improved – and we could improve them. Thanks to the local community, we won the ballot in 1996 after proving to our tenants that we were dedicated to their needs.

The following years that I have spent at Almond HA have been rewarding and the association has come a long way. There have been many achievements and I look forward to seeing what the association does in the future.

There have been many highlights of my career with Almond HA, including the opening of our office in Craigshill which allowed us to be in the centre of our largest stock area. This gave tenants easy access if they wanted to speak to us in person, if they had a quick question or if they just wanted to check in. It is somewhere we are all proud of and we are committed to creating an office that is a safe space for all our tenants.

As well as the practical successes that the association has achieved, there have also been highlights within the community throughout the years. To name a few, there was the Challenge Fund Project in 2015 which was established in partnership with West Lothian College and Reusing IT, the beginning of our Starter Pack initiative in 2016 to help tenants moving into their first home, the services given to develop the Craigsfarm Community Project in 2017 which regenerated the open space next to Craigsfarm, the funding of a community fridge in 2018 for West Lothian Youth Action Group to run at Riverside Community Wing and our most recent project I want to highlight is the Growing Together Project that will enable tenants to access fresh, nutritious food from their own homes and local community gardens.

Now it is time to look forward to the future. The commitment of the association has always given us the opportunity to help the people of Livingston to live happy, healthy lifestyles and this community spirit is always at the heart of Almond Housing Association. The Coronavirus Pandemic has been tough for all, and I am proud to have joined the staff at Almond HA to do everything possible for our tenants during this difficult time. With the current circumstances, I recognise the difficulties we are all facing, and I will remain in post until the board are able to appoint a new CEO."

Best wishes,
George



Dreaming of the future... 1979



Christmas 2016



Stock tour 2017



Riverside Community Wing Refurb 2018

Prize draw!

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, we have been unable to source vouchers for our Almond Award this season. We hope to have the draw back for the Autumn newsletter, but we will base the decision on the lockdown restrictions in place at the time of print. **Stay safe!**



Community Heroes

The Coronavirus pandemic has been a difficult time for everyone and we would like to say a special thank you to the community groups who have helped our tenants during this time. Everyone has come together to help and we have a sneak peek at some of the work carried out by our *Community Heroes*.



Craigshill Growing Together Project



West Lothian Youth Action Project



Ladywell Community Fridge



Craigshill Good Neighbour Network

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY "OUT OF HOURS" REPAIRS: 0845 038 0040 (Calls cost up to 7p per minute, plus your phone company's access charge. Alternatively, you can call our office on 01506 439 291 and select option 3 to be redirected at your local rate).

Almond Housing Association	01506 439 291	Homeless Persons	0800 032 3450	Scottish Power (General)	0845 270 0700
Gas Leaks	0800 111 999	Howden Health Centre	01506 423 800	(Emergency)	0845 272 7999
Citizens Advice Bureau	01506 432 977	Litter Hotline	0800 616 446	St John's Hospital	01506 523 000
Craigshill Health Centre	01506 432 621	Police	101	Street Lighting	01506 280 000
Energy Advice	0808 808 2282	Refuse Collection	01506 280 000	West Lothian Council	01506 280 000

OUR PHONE LINES ARE OPEN AS USUAL DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.