



## New builds in Ladywell

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## Meet the new CEO, John Davidson

*Q&A ... find out more on page 2*



# Q&A with our new CEO **John Davidson**

## WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE ROLE AT ALMOND HA?

Having been Director of Customer Services at Cairn Housing Association for around 7½ years I was keen to progress my career within the housing sector. I wanted my first post as CEO to be with an organisation that I felt would be a good fit with my experience, personal ambition, and values. Almond HA has a reputation for being a local housing association which delivers services beyond housing and which looks to make a positive impact on the wider community. It has great foundations and I'm looking forward to building on these.

## WHAT'S ON YOUR AGENDA?

My initial observations are that there are many areas of strength and examples of great customer service at Almond HA. I am keen to ensure that we continue to engage with our customers and look at ways to make it easy for them to give regular feedback on how we are doing. Almond HA exists to provide homes and services to customers and it's vital that we know from them when we are doing well and where we can improve.

## TELL US SOMETHING THAT MIGHT SURPRISE PEOPLE?

I left school with 3 'O grades' only having an interest in getting a job so that I could buy a car and go out every weekend. After a couple of years I realised the advice from my parents to 'stick in at school' (which I ignored) had been right and so I made the decision to give up my job (and car) to go to college and then University, where I discovered my interest in social housing.



**John Davidson,**  
CEO of Almond HA

## WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU'VE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

I'm a great believer in the saying 'what gets measured gets done' which is something that I have found to be continually true during my career in housing... and of course the converse is also true!

## Growing Together

Growing Together is a partnership between **Almond Housing Association** and **West Lothian Youth Action Project** to support the Craigshill community to improve their access to healthy, fresh produce.

There are four dimensions to the project: growing, cooking, eating, and sharing food.

Due to Coronavirus, we have had to change the way we work but there has never been a more important time to shift to local food production to ensure that everyone has access to healthy, fresh and tasty food.

Throughout lockdown we have been making sure that the most vulnerable in our society have continued to have access to food through our food box deliveries. Now this is coming to an end we want to shift the focus to empower the community to produce some of their own food.

A new community garden is being created in Rowan Grove and we would welcome residents becoming involved in deciding which plants, flowers, and vegetables they would like to see included.

Once lockdown eases further, we have plans to support local residents who are interested in sourcing and growing food locally through volunteering, workshops, gardening sessions and community food events designed to support sustainable lifestyle changes. We are working on how to deliver some of these activities online too.

To get involved with any aspect of the project or for more information get in touch by emailing the project coordinator Kat directly at [growing@wlyap.org.uk](mailto:growing@wlyap.org.uk).





## New developments

The last few months have been very challenging with our site at the former St Pauls Church, Ladywell closing in late March as a result of lockdown. The project had been on target to provide 12 additional properties for social rent in mid-July.

However, we are happy to announce that the contractor, JR Construction (Scotland) Ltd, safely resumed construction work in late June and, all being well, the new homes should be completed during October.



## Return to Repairs

Our staff would really like to **thank you** for your patience during these challenging few months whilst we have had to operate an emergency-only repair service.

We can now confirm that in line with Scottish Government guidelines, and in partnership with our contractors, Response and Turners, we are back to being able to provide all emergency, urgent and routine repairs. We can now also offer appointments for all works that are classed as urgent.

Staff are still unable to carry out internal inspections but with a bit of ingenuity by tenants and staff we are able to work around this in the majority of cases.



## Stock Condition Survey is here!

Every 3 to 5 years, Almond HA commissions an external agency to check on the condition of our stock and what we need to do to make it fit for the future. This information forms the basis of all our plans in terms of replacements e.g. kitchen, bathroom, window, boiler, fencing etc. It also tells us how much money we need to ensure the houses are up to standard.

This year we aim to do the largest survey in Almond's history, and **we need your help**.

All tenants will receive a letter from Almond HA explaining the purpose of the stock condition survey but those being asked to give access will then be contacted by our consultant, Graham & Sibbald to arrange a suitable time.

All necessary COVID arrangements will be carried out during completion of the survey.



# We have a winner!

As lockdown restrictions ease, we are delighted to bring back our Almond Award for this quarter. Congratulations to Mr & Mrs Hynd, who have won **£250 worth of vouchers** for Almondvale Shopping Centre and Asda.



This draw is our way of thanking customers for keeping on top of their rent payments, taking care of their home and generally being a good tenant.

Our next **Almond Award** will be run in **Winter 2020**. To be entered for the draw to win **£250 worth of vouchers**, simply:

- 1** Maintain a clear rent account for a minimum period of three months immediately prior to the draw.
- 2** Don't be involved in any anti-social behaviour in your area.
- 3** Maintain your tenancy and any garden area to a satisfactory standard.
- 4** Allow our contractors to gain access to your home where appropriate.

*Well done to Mr & Mrs Hynd and a big thanks to all our tenants!*

## Virtual AGM

We are delighted that our **AGM** could go ahead on *Thursday 3rd September*. It looked slightly different this year as we held it virtually through Microsoft Teams.

Thank you to everyone who could attend virtually, and we look forward to (hopefully) seeing our members in person next year.



## 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.**