

# Pentland Press

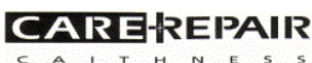
## COMING NEAR YOU

Pentland Housing Group Staff to Carry Out Tenant Survey  
During Summer 2016—more details in the next Newsletter



Spring 2016

What is Legionella?  
Tenant Suggestion Box—  
Have your say!  
Important Facts  
Free Money Advice!  
Become a Board Member



Emergency Out of Hours Service

Phone 07802 930 685

[www.pentlandhousing.co.uk](http://www.pentlandhousing.co.uk)

## Pentland Press

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Charity SCO 0037286

This Newsletter is available  
in a variety of different  
formats, contact the office,  
for further details.

# Chief Executive's Letter

**W**elcome to the Spring edition of Pentland Press. We hope our newsletter provides you with lots of information about what we are doing and how you can get involved. We are always eager to welcome new members to our Tenant review group or to join our board.

We are keen to keep in touch and hear your views personally and are planning to visit as many homes as possible in the Summer. We will let you know the

details, give plenty of notice and check you are happy to have a visit but the idea is for our staff to come out to meet as many people as possible and give you the opportunity to let us know your thoughts.

A big thank you goes to the Thurso Youth Group, who have again been working hard to help us produce

this edition, and you will be able to learn more about some of them on their pages. The newsletter team don't stand still for long and are already working on the Summer edition if you have any ideas or suggestions please let us know. In the meantime I hope you enjoy this edition.



**Richard Armitage**  
Chief Executive

## Spring 2016

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# Pentland Housing's First Modern Apprentice

Chelsey Trueman is Pentland Housing's first Modern Apprentice. Chelsey took up the post of Corporate Assistant, Modern Apprentice (MA) on 15 March 2016 within the Corporate team for a one year placement and is already providing tenants with a great service on reception.

Pulteneytown People's Project (PPP) secured 5 administration MA places through Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and offered a place to Pentland Housing. PPP is a charity and a social enterprise, and all profits go back into the community and the facility. They run as a business but by



Chelsey Trueman,  
Corporate Assistant Modern Apprentice

supporting their business you are also supporting the community they serve.

The Chief Executive (CEO)

attended a recent Jobs Event hosted by the Caithness Chamber of Commerce, along with the Corporate Officer (CO), Customer Services Assistant (CSA) and Finance Manager (FM). The event was well attended, with interest on the MA advert as well as other opportunities within the Pentland Housing Group.



L-R: Rachel, CSA; Caroline, CO; Richard, CEO; & Corrine, FM

## Useful Contacts

### Fire and Rescue Brigade

01463 240 999

(24 hours)

### SEPA

Floodline

0845 988 11 88

### NHS 24

(Out of hours medical advice/  
GP Service)

08454 242424

### Scottish and Southern Electric

Freephone

0800 300 999

### Northern Constabulary

0845 603 33 88

### Transco Gas

Freephone

0800 111 999

### Scottish Water

0845 601 88 55

(24 hours)

### Citizens Advice

Thurso 01847 894243

Wick 01955 605989

## Would You Like to be a Board Member? Read below for more details...

Pentland Housing Association (PHA) and its subsidiaries have been through a period of considerable change and successful consolidation, which of necessity has been inwardly focused, and is ready to move forward. There is a strong sense of renewal about the organisation, of having strengthened the foundations, and being much readier for and focused on the future.

PHA are looking for new Board Members to join the Board of Directors.

*"The Governing Body leads and directs the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users"* Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management Standard 1

For further information please contact one of the following:

Andi Wakeman

### Chair

pha@pentlandhousing.co.uk

Richard Armitage

### Chief Executive

richard@pentlandhousing.co.uk

Caroline Paul

### Corporate Officer

caroline@pentlandhousing.co.uk



Andi Wakeman, Chair

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L-R: Yvonne, Fiona, Lisa & Carol

# Free Money Advice

Are you struggling to pay your rent?  
 Are your debts increasing?  
 Have your benefits reduced/stopped because of changes to the benefits system?  
 Any other money worries?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions we can refer you to our Money Advice Worker, Jennifer Harvey, to give you specialist advice. Jennifer can do an assessment to ensure you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to and help you manage your money effectively. Appointments can be arranged in the office;

or if it would be more convenient, appointments can be held in your own home. If you are interested in seeing Jennifer, please contact your Housing Officer (see contact details) who will be happy to refer you: *Making Advice Work (MAW) Project; part of the Scottish Legal Aid Board Grant Funding Programme*

**"The service is completely confidential."**

## Your Housing Officer

**Carol Treasurer**  
 01847 807 113  
 carol@pentlandhousing.co.uk

**Fiona Jack**  
 01847 807 109  
 fiona@pentlandhousing.co.uk

**Yvonne Gunn**  
 01847 807 111  
 yvonne@pentlandhousing.co.uk

**Lisa Cormack**  
 01847 807 101  
 lisa@pentlandhousing.co.uk

## Welfare Reform Updates!

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 has already brought many changes. Most recently, in the Summer Budget 2015 further cuts and changes have been announced.

### Do these changes affect you?

If they do affect you, we advise you to make the following necessary steps –

- Ensure that you are informed of the changes that might affect you. If you are clear about the money that you will have coming in, you will

be able to better prepare for these changes.

- In the future you may need to budget your money in a different way and if you don't currently have access to the internet, you may need to start thinking about how you can do this, for example the local library or this office may be able to help.
- If you don't currently have one, it would be a good idea to open a bank account and learn how to manage this. The government's plan is that everyone should

have their benefits paid into a bank account. Most banks offer a basic bank account that can receive regular payments and be used to pay rent and bills.

**For further information contact your Housing Officer at Pentland Housing**



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# How Can You Get Involved?

## Join the Pentland Tenant Review Group

### What We're About

We have previously introduced you to the Pentland Tenants Review Group (PTRG), a group of our tenants whose purpose is to help us, Pentland Housing Association (PHA), provide you with a landlord who gives you the best service it can. To do this, the group look at individual processes and procedures that we use and see if there are ways in which they can be improved for the benefit of our tenants. Since its inception, over a year ago, the group has been involved in the publication of the annual Tenants Charter report and reviews of PHA's letting standard and our contractor tendering process. Changes made as a result of these reviews have, we believe, led to improvements which are already benefitting all PHA tenants.

### What We're Up To!

Currently the group are looking at the performance of our various maintenance/repair contractors and how they can be encouraged to improve the service they provide. Before making any recommendations PTRG need to gather as much information from tenants in the form of returned tenant's satisfaction surveys (these come with all work orders for any repairs reported). Whether you prefer to do this by returning paper copies or by the alternative electronic methods that are now being made available is up to you.

We would however encourage you to return the satisfaction surveys once the work has been completed, as without them PTRG will find it difficult to provide sufficient evidence to present to PHA's Board in support of their recommendations



### What You Can Do To Help!

As an additional aid the PTRG has asked us to enclose a more detailed survey with this newsletter which they hope will provide them with more varied information to consider. Taking a few minutes to complete and return this survey will provide additional valuable views and concerns which can be used to formulate suggestions for improvements to the Board. This together with the return of repair satisfaction surveys really is your chance to be heard and the more voices we hear from, then the more likely it is for changes to be adopted and your experience of our repair services improved. To assist the group to build a picture of how our tenants feel about how the Pentland Housing

contractors are performing they are enclosing a survey with this newsletter and would please ask for your help by taking a few minutes to complete and return it to them, this will enable your views and any concerns you may have to be incorporated in the suggestions for improvement presented to the board, this really is your chance to be heard and your views used to the benefit of you all.

### How You Can Join

Once the current review is completed the group intend to review as many other areas of PHA's business as they can, again with the aim of improving the service we provide. The group has about six members at the moment but would welcome new prospective members. If you would be interested in joining them you can be assured of a **warm welcome and a cup of tea/coffee and maybe a biscuit!** Meetings are informal and are held approximately **every 6 weeks within Pentland Housing's Trail Street office in Thurso.**

### Contact Details

If you would like to join the group, or are just interested in finding out more about it please contact Carol Treasurer on 807113, Carol acts as the secretary for the PTRG. You can also contact Carol if you would like any further information on any aspects of Tenant participation.



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## Meet the Thurso Youth Forum Members

### Fusion Events:

Silent Disco with local DJ – P7 to S6 – Thurso Youth Club – 24 June

Contact For More Information– 01847 895782

Music transmitted through wireless headphones ‘no noise complaints!!!’



**Name:** Fraser Steven  
**Age:** 15  
**Hobbies:** Squash and Golf

**How long have you been involved?**

I have been involved for a year and a half. I initially got involved through attending Pupil Council Leadership Training.

**What have you been doing in youth forum?**

On 21 March 2016 I went down to the Highland Council Head

Quarters to do work experience with my uncle, Head of Education, Jim Steven. I observed the way he worked on a day to day basis.

**What do you hope to do this year with the youth forum?**

In the future I plan on creating a board game which will involve the topic of “recovering” from alcohol and drug abuse. We are also planning a fusion event which will incorporate different highlife highland organisations.

**Name:** Sophie Mclvor  
**Age:** 16  
**Hobbies:** Netball & Reading

**How long have you been involved?**

I started Youth Forum right at the start so just over 2 years ago as it’s a good chance to open up doors to new opportunities; it’s also good for my CV.

**What have you been doing at Youth Forum?**

I’ve been involved in fundraisers for example pudding nights and jam sessions that were open to the general public. I’ve been involved in gaining the attention of the community to show that our group is available to join which

we’ve done by creating this newsletter. I too have attended the Highland Youth Parliament last June, which opened our eyes to problems that are spread across a wide area. We’ve also attended general meetings with the Wick forum to come together and discuss more local matters; this included doing laser tag for a team building exercise.

**What do you hope to do this year with the Youth Forum?**

We’re hoping to do a fusion event, which combines other highland highlife organisations. I also hope we can get new members interested in the forum so more ideas can be put into action.



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# Meet the Thurso Youth Forum Members

## Fusion Events:

Health Milkshakes – Thurso Youth Club – 24 June 2016

Contact For More Information – 01847 895782



**Name:** Erin Britton

**Age:** 16

**Hobbies:** Photography and gymnastics.

going again this year. I've also recently become an exec. of the highland youth forum which opens up a lot of doors.

**How long have you been involved?**

I started Youth Forum right at the start so just over 2 years ago

**What do you hope to do this year with the youth forum?**

I'd love to attend more highland youth parliament. We're also going to be included in making questions for the gala's Roald Dahl book hunt alongside the library. I'm looking forward to attending more meetings with the executives too.

**What have you been doing in youth forum?**

I've attended the highland youth parliament twice now and I am planning on

**Name:** Kirsty McIvor

**Age:** 16

**Hobbies:** Netball

**How long have you been involved?**

I have been with the youth forum for over a year and have had many great experiences being involved in this group.

**What have you been doing in youth forum?**

Last year I was involved in community events such as pudding nights to raise funds for bigger projects. I also got involved in the highland LEADER programme and went to Skye last June to the Highland youth parliament which was a great opportunity

as we learnt a lot about things from the problems that people faced in school to mental health which we are hoping to improve and make people more aware of.

**What do you hope to do this year with the youth forum?**

At the minute we have been working on this newsletter which I have enjoyed doing as graphics is something I'm highly interested in. This year we are also hoping to get mental health more aware to people and the struggles that young and older people face. We're hoping to do this by setting up groups in schools etc.





**Pentland**  
community enterprises

## Garage/ Storage Facilities

## Pennyland and Mount Vernon Estates

For more details  
call Heidi on  
**01847 807 110**

or

[heidi@  
pentlandce.co.uk](mailto:heidi@pentlandce.co.uk)



## Who Do They Think We Are?

First and foremost Pentland Community Enterprises (PCE) are a social enterprise company and are a subsidiary company of Pentland Housing Association. Over the last 8 years they have developed a range of services and provisions that are offered to the local community and to a wider audience throughout the far north. However, that is not all... they use their entrepreneurial skills to develop, support and encourage sustainable business ventures social purpose through activities and reinvesting their profits to increase social impact. The most notable development in the last few months is the consolidation with Pentland Energy Advice to enhance the in-house knowledge, expertise and streamline services.

In summary, PCE:

- **Rent** out 316 **domestic garages** across 32 operational sites. Two additional sites have been demolished and it is intended to develop these sites to include a mixture of workshops, covered and uncovered parking bays as well as newly constructed garages. Three other sites are in the process of being sold.
- Deliver a **property maintenance service** called Pentland365 to local residents
- Deliver a range of **energy services** through Pentland Energy Advice; such as **airtightness testing, domestic energy advice, thermal imaging and business energy advice**
- Provide **private rented accommodation** at mid-market rent levels;
- Provide a **factoring service** for home owners.

The staff who are now in place are:



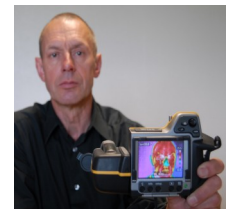
**Angela Rigg**  
Projects Officer



**Gill Halliday**  
Energy Adviser



**Sharon Lennie**  
Energy Adviser



**Andrew Chadwick**  
Thermographic  
Inspector



**Heidi Warner**  
Senior  
Administrative  
Assistant

**Never worry about home repairs again**

**0845 8505 365**

[www.pentland365.com](http://www.pentland365.com)

**PENTLAND ENERGYADVICE**

FOR ALL YOUR ENERGY NEEDS – WE CAN PROVIDE  
Energy Performance Certificates, Green Deal Assessments,  
Thermal Imaging, Air Tightness Testing, Energy Advice,  
Mould and Condensation management advice.

Tel: 01847 896524 Email: [info@pentlandenergy.co.uk](mailto:info@pentlandenergy.co.uk)  
Tel: 01847 895580 Web: [www.pentlandenergy.co.uk](http://www.pentlandenergy.co.uk)

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# Are Your Windows Covered in Water Droplets?

**I**t is quite likely you already know what condensation is. Getting up in the morning you may have seen the water droplets covering the inside of your windows. Although windows may seem like the culprit, they are actually not the cause of condensation.

**Houses do not create moisture, human activity does.** Condensation is due to you and your family's activity within your home. Given the right conditions condensation will form on any surface, but it

is often more visible on windows.

The air inside your home contains moisture. When the indoor temperature cools down the air cannot hold as much water vapour. The result is that the water vapour condenses as a liquid becoming visible particularly on cold non absorbent surfaces such as windows. Unseen moisture penetrates your carpets, fabrics and any other absorbent surface often making them feel cold.

## Where Does The Moisture Come From?

### US!!

Our every breath when sleeping or awake puts moisture

into the air. On a cold morning, you can actually see the moisture appear right in front of you, when you breathe. Water vapour also comes from using water, such as when cooking, showering and growing indoor plants.

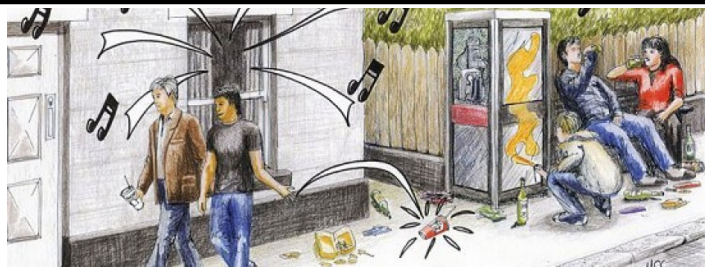


### A quick guide to demonstrate how much moisture can be created across the course of a day (based on an average house)

HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITY	AVERAGE MOISTURE CONTENT each jug represents 1 litre of water
CLOTHES DRYING (UNVENTED)	5 jugs
WHILE SLEEPING	3 jugs
SHOWER AND BATHS	2 jugs
GAS HEATERS (UNFLUED)	1 jug
COOKING	3 jugs
FISH TANKS (230 LITRE)	1 jug
DISHES	1 jug
CLOTHES WASHING	1 jug

**To avoid condensation and mould please ensure you are adequately ventilating your property by opening windows regularly and shutting internal doors. If you do not ventilate properly you will experience condensation which may then result in the growth of mould.**

# Anti-Social Behaviour



The most common complaints we receive are about:

- Nuisance, rowdy or inconsiderate neighbours
- Fouling and noise from domestic pets
- Littering, dumping of rubbish and abandonment of cars
- Inconsiderate or inappropriate use of cars

Things that you can do to help:

- Keep calm and try to talk to the perpetrator
- **Report to Pentland Housing Association**
- Keep a diary
- Contact the Police, Tel: 101  
Non emergency  
Tel: 999 Emergency

## Pentland Housing Association have Zero Tolerance to Anti-Social Behaviour!

Anti-social behaviour means causing or likely to cause alarm, distress, nuisance or annoyance to any person or causing damage to

anyone's property. If anyone is exercising behaviour which you consider to be anti-social, or you are being accused of anti-social

behaviour— **tell us!** We liaise with Police Scotland on a weekly basis and want to help you to live in a safe and friendly environment.

## Scottish Government Cash for Energy



On 3 June 2015 it was announced that social housing providers could bid for funding under the Scottish Government's Home Energy Efficiency Scotland (HEEPS) Cashback scheme. With a budget of £5 million, grants of up to £250,000 per organisation are available towards installing the following measures:

- **Solid Wall Insulation (both internal and external)**
- **Hard to Treat Cavity Wall Insulation**

The HEEPS: Cashback scheme for Social Housing Providers is available to all social housing providers in Scotland and aims to accelerate energy efficiency improvements in the social housing sector. Pentland Housing was successful in their bid to attain grant funding for the HEEPS: Cashback scheme for Social Housing Providers. Pentland Housing received the biggest grant in Scotland and in the beginning of February the works

began to externally insulate 30 properties that have electric heating as a primary heating source. Energy Solutions and Innovations Scotland (ESI) are experienced contactors in this field and already have worked for other housing providers in Caithness, the works to these properties is projected to be complete by early April 2016.

***"Pentland Housing received the biggest grant in Scotland... Externally insulate 30 properties..."***



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# Keep Your Garden Beautiful!



*“Tenants handbook highlights the expectations that fall on all tenants in respect of their responsibilities in keeping their gardens tidy.”*

## Communal Areas

Spring is here and soon our contractor D MacDonald Landscapes will be commencing the summer schedule of grass and estate maintenance of all the common areas throughout our housing schemes.

During mid April to Mid October he will be cutting and strimming the grass every 2 weeks as well as regular maintenance to shrubs and planting beds. We all wish to maintain the amenity value of the sites but there are some who don't respect this. We ask that you are vigilant to any fly tipping and contact us should you witness anything untoward. Kevin Tait our Maintenance Officer regularly inspects the work of contactors and you are invited to join him on a walk round of

the estate or contact your Housing Officer (*see page 4 for details*) if you have concerns about any aspect of the estate management.

## Tenant Gardens

Better weather also means that the opportunity to maintain your own garden arises. Section 5.11 of the Tenants handbook highlights the expectations that fall on all tenants in respect of their responsibilities in keeping their gardens tidy. We are seeing an increasing rise in poorly kept gardens and the maintenance teams and housing teams will be reminding tenants of their duties should the standards fall below these expectations. Therefore items such as children's toys

being regularly left out, grass not being cut, household furniture stacked in gardens or overflowing bin bags will be identified to those tenants and they will be asked to remedy the situation.

Also remember to pick up after your pets by bagging it and binning it. This is not only for your own and your family's health but also that of any visitors or contactors, as dog and cat faeces can spread various bacteria such as cryptosporidium, campylobacter, ring & round worm and gairdia.



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## Pentland Upgrade Homes

For 2016/17 Pentland Housing are continuing with the renewal of the major components of our Pennyland properties. This year we aim to renew a further 40 boilers, these will be the older Baxi Back Boilers and they will be replaced by wall hung energy efficient Worcester Bosch Condensing Boilers. The work was retendered during the winter and Suttar & Bruce have been selected as the preferred

contractors. We aim to start the works before May and very shortly those who are in line for

already around 10 kitchens that have been identified but you are asked to contact our

should you wish that your kitchen be replaced. Kevin will make an inspection and be able to advise on the likelihood.



a replacement will be contacted. In 2016/17 we also aim to renew around 30 kitchens. There are

**Maintenance Officer, Kevin Tait**  
[kevin@pentlandhousing.co.uk](mailto:kevin@pentlandhousing.co.uk), **01847 801 105**



Kevin Tait

## Look How We Are Doing...

The information below is from the period October 2015 to December 2015

<b>Number of Properties</b>	492
<b>Tenant Arrears</b>	5.41%
<b>Properties Let</b> (Average turnaround is 17 days)	5 Properties Re-Let to new tenants
<b>Mutual Exchanges</b>	1
<b>Abandonments</b>	0
<b>Emergency Repairs</b> (Average completion time 1 hour 18 mins)	42 Jobs 100% on Time
<b>Routine Repairs</b> (Average completion time 7 days)	330 jobs 90% on time
<b>Repairs Overall Satisfaction</b> (Either satisfied or very satisfied)	93.06%
<b>Gas Services</b> (Completed on time)	100%
<b>Anti Social Behaviour</b> (Resolved on time)	94.6%
<b>Stage 1 &amp; 2 Complaints</b> (Resolved on time)	83%

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