

# Pentland Press

## Spring 2017



**OFFICES CLOSED**

**Friday, 14 April 2017**

&

**Monday, 17 April 2017**



**CARE REPAIR**  
CAITHNESS



**Emergency Out of Hours Service**

**Phone 07802 930 685**

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

# Pentland Chief Executive's Letter

## Press

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

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Welcome to our Spring 2017 Edition of Pentland Press. The newsletter is prepared for our tenants, customers, members and stakeholders. I hope you find it interesting and informative. Please let us know if there is anything you would

like included in future editions.

We are planning our walk-about in late Spring time. We had to delay our initial timescale but, are keen to visit as many homes as possible involving staff from throughout the organisation and are looking forward

to meeting you and hearing your thoughts.



**Richard Armitage**  
**Chief Executive**

## Look How We Are Doing...

The information below is from the period October 2016 to December 2016

<b>Number of Properties</b>	492
<b>Tenant Arrears</b>	5.65%
<b>Properties Let</b> (Average turnaround is 22 days)	10 Properties Re-Let to new tenants
<b>Mutual Exchanges</b>	2
<b>Abandonments</b>	2
<b>Emergency Repairs</b> (Average completion time 1 hour 36 mins)	17 Jobs 100% on time
<b>Routine Repairs</b> (Average completion time 8 days)	301 jobs 85.5% on time
<b>Repairs Complete First Time</b>	84.45%
<b>Gas Services</b> (76 completed on time)	100%
<b>Anti Social Behaviour</b> (Resolved on time)	20 cases 90%
<b>Stage 1 &amp; 2 Complaints</b> (Resolved on time)	One 100%

### Office Opening Hours:

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## Board Members at March 2017

### PHA Board Members

Andi Wakeman  
Bob Bell  
Colin Earnshaw  
Elaine Forbes  
Jim Hair  
Jenny Lawless  
Colin MacDonald  
Ian McElroy  
Bob McGechan  
John Perry  
**Plus 5 Vacancies**

### Audit Committee

Jim Hair  
Elaine Forbes  
Jenny Lawless  
John Perry  
Neil Robertson

### Staffing Committee

Jenny Lawless  
Bob Bell  
Colin MacDonald  
Bob McGechan

### Health & Safety Committee

Jim Hair  
Colin Earnshaw  
Colin MacDonald  
Bob McGechan

### PCE Board Members

Neil Robertson  
Jim Kelly  
Bob Bell  
Jim Hair  
Colin MacDonald

## Pentland Housing Need Tenant Board Members...

Please read below for more details...



**Andi Wakeman,**

The Board of Directors are made up of volunteers, of which should have tenant representation. As at December 2016, Pentland Housing Association (PHA) has **no tenants** on the board of directors, therefore we need **YOU.**

There are currently 3 co-opted vacancies and 2 casual vacancies on the Board.

If you are over 18 and rent your home from Pentland Housing, then you could make a suitable board member.

**All we would ask from you is:-**

- To act in the best interest of the Association at all times**
- To act in the best interest of all PHA tenants and service users**

- Don't place any personal or other interest ahead of your primary duty to the Association.**

For further information please contact one of the following:

**Andi Wakeman  
Chair**

[silverbird165@gmail.com](mailto:silverbird165@gmail.com)

**Richard Armitage  
Chief Executive**  
[richard@pentlandhousing.co.uk](mailto:richard@pentlandhousing.co.uk)

**Rachel Harness  
Customer services Assistant**  
[rachel@pentlandhousing.co.uk](mailto:rachel@pentlandhousing.co.uk)



*Please contact your Housing Officer (see page 5 for contact details) or Corporate Officer (see above) if you would like to comment on any of the above Policies.*

**Emergency Out of Hours Service**

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Pentland Housing Association Ltd's rent consultation meetings were held on 30 & 31 January 2017, to which all occupants and tenants were cordially invited. Feedback from these consultations forms part of the decision making process which allowed the Board to formulate their decision regarding rent levels for 2017/18.

Taking into consideration the comments raised regarding our proposals for 2017/18, the Board of Directors gave their approval to an increase of **2.2 + 1%**, (October RPIx +1%). This is in accordance with our current rent policy and will allow the Association to continue to invest in our existing housing



stock through our planned maintenance programmes, and maintain our current services.

Letters have been sent to all Scottish Secure Tenants individually to advise of this years rent increase which will be applied from 1 April 2017.

If you are currently receiving housing

benefit, we confirm the Highland Council have been advised of the impending increases.

However, if this year's rent increase has added further pressure to your financial position, you may be entitled to benefits.

The Highland Council offers benefits which are designed to assist

individuals or households who are least able to pay for services. Application forms are available at the Pentland Housing Office, please liaise with your area officer (see page 5 for contact details) who will assist you to complete the necessary documentation.

## Universal Credit Update

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 has already brought many



changes which we have given information in previous newsletters. You may be aware from recent press releases that the latest change being considered is that Universal Credit in Scotland will be paid out more frequently and more flexibly than the rest of the

UK. Tenants who receive help with rent through the universal credit system, will be able to opt for the payment to go directly to their landlord. They will also be allowed to request their payment every fortnight rather than monthly. For further

information on any of the above please contact your Housing Officer at Pentland Housing Association.



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# Tenant Participation

## What's been happening and what's planned?

We have sent out the full tenant survey and are currently collating the results and looking at the issues raised to see how we can improve our services. Further to this we are still planning to do door to door interviews in the spring to gather your views on our services and get your ideas for improvement.

Apart from this large scale survey we also continuously carry out surveys when new tenants move into one of our properties and on any work that is carried out on your home. We would encourage you to complete these questions as they do help us to identify any problems and try to

rectify them.

We have also issued rent consultation letters and this year have given you more information of the reason for the increase and detail on what we spend your rent money. A clinic was also held in both Thurso and Wick to gather your concerns and comments and these are fed to the board of directors to assist with the decision making process.

The tenant review group are currently investigating the work of our contractors, they are using information they obtained from a survey they carried out last year along with the relevant information from the global survey to help us formulate new work practices to benefit all the tenants,

details of changes and suggested improvements will be given in future newsletters.

## What would get you involved and what topics would you like covered?

In the spring we hope to start a new round of presentations on subjects that might be of interest to our tenants, the last one we held was on healthy eating and was very interesting so thank you to those who came along. I would like to cover fire safety and plan to offer this talk in both Thurso and Wick so I will send out notifications as soon as this has been arranged so please come along. I would also very much like to



hear from you with suggestions for topics that would interest you and what would bring you and your friends along so please give me a phone or email me with any ideas.

Contact Carol Treasurer or if you prefer have a word with your area housing officer. Contact details below.



L-R: Yvonne, Fiona, Lisa & Carol

## Do you need ANY of the following Debt and Finance Advice?

- One to one support on finance
- One to one support on access to services
- Liaison with debtors
- Setting up arrangements with debtors
- Developing a financial plan
- Attend a Count your Cash day
- Managing rent payments and avoiding falling into arrears
- Managing personal debt

## Do you need ANY of the following Energy Advice?

- One to one support on energy advice
- Evaluation of energy use
- Cutting down on energy use
- Finding a cheaper method of accessing energy required

Please contact your Housing Officer and they can organise a referral for you.



## Housing Officers

### 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

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Pentland  
community enterprises

### Storage & Parking

If you would like to be entered into a draw to win the use of a garage for 3 months, simply follow the steps:

# Facebook Competition Time Pentland Garage Sites!

- Like our Pentland Garage site page

- Comment on the competition

- Share the competition

Keep an eye on our Facebook page to keep up to date with all our exciting

developments throughout our garage sites. Remember we offer parking solutions for cars, caravans, boats, trailers and commercial parking requirements. If you have a parking problem please get in

touch to see if we can help and accommodate your needs or see pages 6 and 7 for more details.

For more details on any of the information please contact any of the PCE staff

## Parking Solutions Available Now

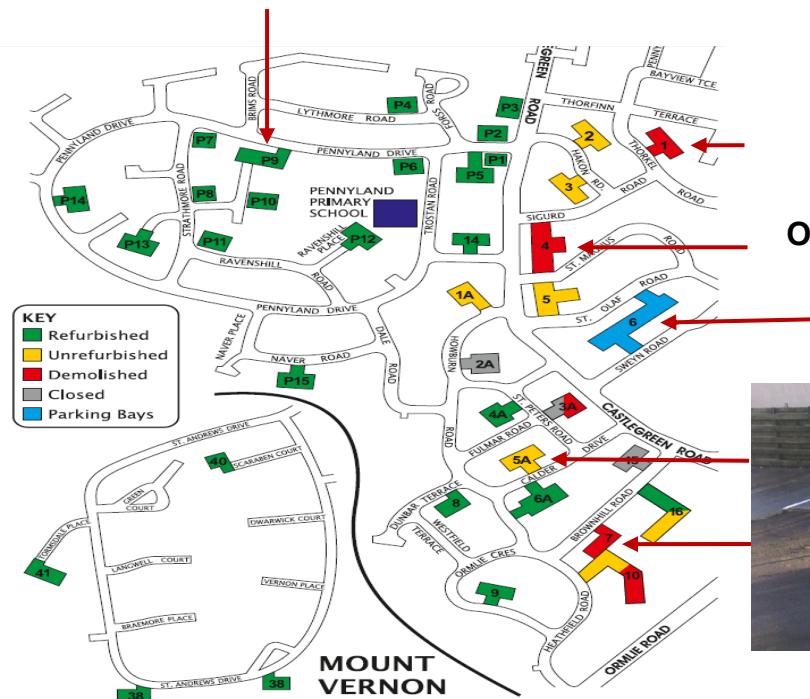
### Available to Rent:

- Garages
- Parking Bays (secure off road parking)
- Plots
- Caravan Storage
- Boat Storage

If you are interested in getting your vehicle off road for less than 66p a day you can:

- Get a guaranteed space
- Secure parking
- Off road parking

See map for available parking bays:



## Secure Parking Bays For Let

Off Brownhill Road & Heathfield Road



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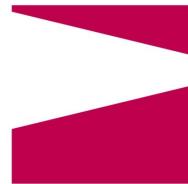
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**Angela Rigg**  
**Projects Officer**  
01847 807118  
angela.rigg@pentlandce.co.uk



**Paul Bremner**  
**Energy Adviser**  
01847 807116  
paul.bremner@pentlandenergy.co.uk



**Pentland**  
community enterprises



**Heidi Warner**  
**Senior Admin Assistant**  
01847 807110  
heidi@pentlandce.co.uk



**Sharon Lennie**  
**Energy Adviser**  
01847 807104  
sharon.lennie@pentlandenergy.co.uk

## Energy Advice

The 2 energy projects that we oversee are ongoing. Both concentrate on home visits to try to help reduce energy consumption in properties. The Climate Challenge project is delivered to any property in the Caithness area and the Money Matters project is for tenants of social



housing throughout the Highland wide area. We have a new member of staff who started on Money Matters in mid February. They will be responsible for delivering energy advice to householder in the Inverness-shire area.



**Call**  
**01847 807 110**



**Email**  
[admin@pentlandce.co.uk](mailto:admin@pentlandce.co.uk)



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Winter may be just behind us, but Pentland Housing's grounds and estates maintenance carries on. Donald Macdonald landscapes are using this time to inspect trees, undertake repairs and pruning. The recent high winds caused

some damage to our trees and this is being attended to.

Come April the contractors will get back to cutting the grass and beds across the estates.

**Your garden will also need maintenance; they should:-**

## Keeping the Estates Maintained

- be free from litter & household rubbish
- not be overgrown
- regularly trim hedges which shouldn't grow over neighbouring gardens or public paths
- cut grass should regularly

We carry out routine garden inspections which identify any garden areas that aren't maintained to an acceptable standard. Should tenants gardens fall below

these standards they will be contacted to discuss and rectify this matter, in line with their tenancy agreement.

If you have any particular concerns around the estates or neighbours gardens feel free to contact us or you are welcome to join Kevin Tait, Maintenance Officer on his walk round.

The above is via a summer programme from the end of March to the end of October.

## Stock Surveys



We are trying to reinforce our knowledge of our stock and its condition by carrying out surveys.

These surveys inform us as to the likely ages of the components and how long they are likely to last and when they may need to be replaced such as:

- Boilers
- Kitchens
- Bathrooms

This information is then inputted into our database and is linked to our long term plans for the future.

We have Mark Sheppard, Care & Repair Officer carrying out these checks as a fresh view on the condition of the stock. These inspections **do need** to be carried out and should take about an hour. Mark will be making contact with you either through telephone, text or email to arrange access.



Mark Sheppard

## Are you entitled to a Warm Home Discount?

For winter 2016 to 2017, you could get £140.00 off your electricity bill through the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

The money isn't paid to you – it is a one off discount on your electricity bill between October and April.

The discount will not

affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment.

You can apply directly to your electricity supplier to see if you are eligible and how to apply.

Don't Delay, contact your supplier today.

Source: gov.uk



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## Pentland Housing Emergency Repairs

# 07802 930 685

### EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Caithness & Sutherland Womens Aid**—0345 408 0151—(24 hours)
- Caithness Citizens Advice Bureau**—Thurso 01847 894 243—Wick 01955 605 989
- Crimestoppers**—0800 555 111
- Domestic Abuse Helpline**—0800 027 1234
- Fire Brigade – Police – Ambulance - Coastguard**—999/112 (24 hours)
- Free Money Advice** 0808 800 0118
- Highland Council Service Point**—01349 886 606
- Housing Benefit Enquiries**—0800 393 811
- National Gas Helpline**—0800 111 999 (24 hours)
- National Power Cut Helpline**—105 (24 hours)
- NHS 24**—111 (24 hours)
- Police Scotland**—101 (24 hours)
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service**—01382 835 804
- Scottish Water**—0800 0778 778 (24 hours)
- SEPA Floodline**—0345 988 11 88 (24 hours)
- Universal Credit Helpline**—0345 600 0723

### GP APPOINTMENTS

- Canisby Surgery**—01955 611 205
- Castletown Surgery**—01847 821 205
- Halkirk Surgery**—01847 831 203
- Lybster Medical Centre**—01593 721 216
- Princes Street Surgery**—01847 893 154
- Riverbank Practice**—01847 892 027
- Riverview Practice**—01955 602 355

Volunteer...  
Find out more  
about becoming a  
Board Member,  
read article on page 3...

Please complete this short survey and return to Pentland Housing Association, 37-39 Traill Street, Thurso, KW14 8EG or  
[pha@pentlandhousing.co.uk](mailto:pha@pentlandhousing.co.uk)

What did you like best from this newsletter?

What did you like least?

Which members of your household read this newsletter?

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## Policy Consultation

Risk Management  
Rent Setting —Houses  
Rent Setting —

