

PENTLAND PRESS WINTER NEWSLETTER 2017



Emergency Out of Hours Service
Phone 07802 930 685

Chief Executive's Letter

Pentland Press

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Web:
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A registered Scottish
Charity SCO 0037286

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

Welcome to our
Winter 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.
In the meantime, I
hope you have an
enjoyable festive
period and happy
New Year.



Richard Armitage
Chief Executive



Winter 2017

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Office Opening Hours:

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm — (37-39 Traill Street)

www.pentlandhousing.co.uk

Board Members at December 2017

PHA Board Members

Andi Wakeman
Bob Bell
Colin Earnshaw
Elaine Forbes
Kirsty Gordon
Jim Hair
Jenny Lawless
Colin MacDonald
Ian McElroy
Gavin Powell
John Perry

Audit Committee

Jim Hair
Elaine Forbes
Jenny Lawless
John Perry
Neil Robertson

Staffing Committee

Jenny Lawless
Bob Bell
Colin MacDonald
Ian McElroy

Health & Safety Committee

Jim Hair
Colin Earnshaw
Colin MacDonald

PCE Board Members

Neil Robertson
Jim Kelly
Bob Bell
Jim Hair
Colin MacDonald
John Perry

Pentland Housing Needs Tenant Board Members...

Please read below for more details...

The Board of Directors are made up of volunteers of which there should be tenant representation. As at December 2017, Pentland Housing Association (PHA) have **only 1 tenant** on the board, therefore we need **YOU** and your views. There are currently 4 co-opted vacancies and no casual vacancy on the Board.

If you are over 18 and rent your home from Pentland Housing, then you would make a suitable tenant board member. Alternatively if you are aged 16 – 18 years of age then you have the option of becoming a young observer.

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.**



Andi Wakeman, Chair

UPCOMING POLICY REVIEWS

- Financial Regulators
- Standing Orders
- Procurement

For further information please contact one of the following:

Andi Wakeman
Chair

silverbird165@gmail.com

Richard Armitage
Chief Executive

richard@pentlandhousing.co.uk

Rachel Harness
Corporate Officer

rachel@pentlandhousing.co.uk

Emergency Out of Hours Service
Phone 07802 930 685

Meet Our New Staff Members...

GARY PARKER

Care and Repair Officer



We are pleased to welcome Gary Parker as the new Care & Repair Officer. Gary provides a wide range of experience and knowledge to complete our project officer role, and by supporting our role as agents of the Highland Council, will be aiming to help owner occupiers gain grant funding to help with adaptations or repairs.

GEORGE CRAWFORD

Estates and Ancillary Services Manager



We are pleased to welcome George Crawford to the Management team as Estates and Ancillary Services Manager. George brings a great deal of experience to the organisation and will be responsible for our Asset Management, Maintenance and Repairs of our properties and the Handyman and Care and Repair services. During the coming year we will be working hard to further improve our services and would welcome feedback from any of our stakeholders.

Corporate and Finance Team

Jan Campbell

Customer Services Assistant
Monday—Friday, 9am to 12.30pm



Katie Mackay

Customer Services Assistant
Monday—Friday, 12pm to 5pm



Kimberley O'Prey

Finance Assistant
Monday to Friday, 9.30am—1pm



Three new part time members of staff joined the team in October 2017 who will work directly on the governance, corporate and finance operations of the Pentland Housing Group.

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Be a Good “Festive Neighbour”

As the weather turns colder Pentland Housing are urging tenants to be good ‘winter neighbours’.

Check on your friends and neighbours – especially if they are older, have health problems or a young family.

It is also a good idea to find out if your neighbours have enough food and medication to prevent them from having to go out in very cold or icy weather.

It’s the season of festivity and goodwill. If you’re thinking of throwing your own Christmas or New Year house party, avoid stirring up any tensions by holding the event at a time and place that’s not likely to cause too much of a disturbance. For example, hold the festivities indoors (not much of a problem at this time of the year of course) and try to keep the noise levels down as the night progresses.

Be a good neighbour and help others in need this winter

Don’t be over adventurous on the number of guests – too many people in a small home can cause nuisance as they will inevitably spill out into the garden and create more noise.

Give the neighbours some advance notice that you’re having a party and maybe you could even consider inviting them along? Even if they decline the very fact that you’ve warned them and involved them in the party by inviting them encourages good relations. Remember though, continual house parties are not acceptable!

There are some situations that can be tricky. If you’re on the receiving end of rowdy parties you have every right to complain but think about the context first. If it’s a one-off

and it is not a regular occurrence it could be in everyone’s best interests to let it pass!

Some other things to consider in the winter:

Your garden - Remember to ensure it is kept tidy and anything that may cause damage (including wheelie bins) in stormy weather is secured.

Dogs - Remember in the colder weather that your dog still needs exercising and you must ensure that any fouling is collected and disposed of correctly.

Parking - We all want to be parked as near to our homes as possible but remember, sometimes this is not possible. So please be considerate. Drop your passengers off then park the car in a suitable parking space.

We all wish to live in a friendly and safe environment and we can only do this if everyone works together.



READY FOR WINTER



The festive season brings additional dangers due to an increase in the number of electrical appliances being used. Here are some examples:

- Check Christmas lights conform to British Safety Standards. Remember fairy lights heat up and should be kept away from anything that will burn. Lights intended for internal use should not be used outside.
- Don't overload electrical sockets and be especially careful with Christmas lights.
- Never leave burning candles unattended or better still avoid using them.
- Avoid putting on washing machines, tumble driers or dishwashers when you leave the house or go to bed. Be especially careful with chargers for mobile phones or laptops.
- Ensure cigarettes are extinguished properly and empty ashtrays into a metal bin outside. Keep matches and lighters out of reach of

children.

- Most fires start in the kitchen – never leave a

- Test your smoke alarm and ensure it is working properly. Use the test facility to check it regularly.
- Make sure you and your family know what to do in an emergency – prepare a fire escape plan.
- Finally, celebrate Christmas and New Year safely. The risk of accidents, especially in the kitchen is increased when alcohol is consumed.

Some tenants are caught out by cold weather and suffer damage, distress and inconvenience from burst pipes. Even with minimal damage, you could be faced with disruption whilst repairs are completed. If you intend to go away overnight or for a longer period leave the heating on to maintain a reasonable background temperature and ask someone to visit the property regularly. Alternatively, drain down the system, turn

off the supply at the stop valve and open all taps and leave open. Ensure plugs are removed from sinks and wash basins and flush the toilet to empty the cistern.

IF YOU DISCOVER FROZEN PIPES:

- Turn off the supply at the stop valve and switch off gas and electric water heaters.
- Gently heat the frozen section of pipe using a fan heater, hairdryer, hot water bottle or heated cloths wrapped around the pipe. Thaw from the tap side and work towards the frozen section of pipe.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR PIPES BURST:

- Turn off the supply at the stop valve and



switch off the electrical supply at the mains.

- Do not operate affected appliance.
- Contact Pentland Housing or if the office is closed, contact the out of hours emergency number

07802 930 685

- Open all taps to drain

the system and switch off central heating systems or water heaters.

- Warn neighbours if they are likely to be affected.

DRYING OUT:

- Leave windows, doors including internal and cupboard doors open to ventilate the affected area.
- Keep affected rooms heated but do not over-heat as this could lead to further damage.
- Store damaged contents in a dry place – your insurer may wish to inspect them.

TENANT LIABILITY:

If you fail to take reasonable precautions to prevent burst pipes, you may be held responsible for the damage caused to the property. Your neighbours might also have a claim against you for any damage to their property and

contents. Burst pipes can cause considerable damage to your home. Pentland Housing's insurance provides cover for the structure and fittings owned by us. This does not cover your contents.

Source: Abertay Housing Association

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FREE Home Fire Safety Visit and FREE Smoke Alarms



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland



Fire can happen to anyone.

But it is our job to help make sure your home is as safe from fire as it can be. This is why we provide free Home Fire Safety Visits. Our staff can help you spot a possible fire hazard, offer advice and guidance and fit smoke alarms free of charge if your home requires them.

A Home Fire Safety Visit only takes around 20 minutes. And that 20 minutes might just save your life.

Visits are easy to arrange.

A Home Fire Safety Visit can be organised at a time that suits you, day or night. The Service would also like community members to think about anyone they know who could be at risk from fire. It could be a friend, relative, or neighbour.

To book a free Home Fire Safety Visit for you, or for someone you know:

CALL 0800 0731 999
TEXT 'FIRE' TO 80800
or visit www.firescotland.gov.uk

Always ask for official identification - all employees of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will be happy to produce this on request.



Fact. Every hour of every day there's a house fire in Scotland.



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

Emergency Out of Hours Service
Phone 07802 930 685

Reporting a Repair

To report a repair by telephone, please dial
01847 892507 opt. 1

Email non-urgent repairs to us on
repairs@pentlandhousing.co.uk and it will be picked up.

We are also working on our automated phone system which will give you choices when you ring for either Housing or Maintenance. Or you may be interested to know that we are looking at a phone app for tenants to report non-urgent repairs quickly and easily.

Remember when you are reporting a repair, in any of these forms or even in person at the office, we need the following information:

- Your name and address
- Your telephone number
- Details of the repair (including any useful information)
- When you will be available for repairs to be carried out



Our contractors will try to accommodate either an am or pm time to fit in with your access request, but please remember that emergencies can arise which take precedence over standard repairs and we ask for your understanding in this matter.

Blocked Sink

Sink Blockages

The waste water drain which runs from your house to the public sewer is usually about 4 inches wide, which is less than the diameter of a DVD.

Flushing things like wipes, nappies or cotton buds down the toilet can cause drains to block, flooding you and your neighbours.

Check out the bathroom checklist of 'never flush' items below:

- All wipes (baby, personal cleansing, toilet and household cleaning) - even if the pack says 'flushable'
- Sanitary items
 - Cotton wool
 - Cotton buds
- Disposable nappies and nappy liners



PLANNED REPLACEMENTS 2017/2018

We have a continuing programme of replacements which are selected through a process of assessment - taking age and condition into account for kitchens, roofs and boilers.



Kitchens – There are to be 48 kitchens replaced in 2017/18, these have been identified and notification has been given. This programme started on the 14th August and will run for approximately 32 weeks.

Roofs – The roof replacement programme was started in September this year, later than originally planned. 12 number roofs in total will be replaced at various properties within St Olaf Road, St Magnus Road, Sigurd Road and Castlegreen Road. This programme is expected to run for approximately 20 weeks

Please note that if your property is to be included in the planned replacement programme you will receive correspondence and visits from us to keep you informed of the process.

Boilers – There is an on-going program to replace failed boilers as and when they arise. The annual service of boilers is almost completed with a small number of properties yet to be serviced. If you receive a call or a letter asking you to make contact with the service engineer to allow access into your property to carry out the service, please arrange this at your earliest convenience, if you need any assistance with this, please call our maintenance team.

Electrical Testing- Our program for electrical safety inspections started on the 14th August and will run for approximately 35 weeks. All properties included within this program have been notified. The electrical contractor will make contact with you to arrange access to carry out these inspections.



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Universal Credit — Did You Know?

What's New - Tenant Participation?

You will have received your copy of our annual report and tenant charter report, titled the health check back in October. We hope you liked this new combined edition, some of the information provided in the annual report was previously replicated in the health check so doing it this way saved this duplication and therefore on production and printing costs.

In September we arranged for the tenants to be given a presentation on home fire safety from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, this was very well received by the tenants who came along.

As detailed in earlier newsletters we are starting a door to door walk around to try to meet as many of our tenants as we can, we want to make sure the information we hold is up to date and to gain your views on our services and the way in which we communicate with our tenants. If you are not contacted this year we will be back out in the spring of next year to speak to more tenants, in time we would like to speak to you all.

Our tenant review group is back in action and will be reviewing the data from our global survey and in particular the information relating to our repairs service. We have a new Estates Manager who will be working with the group to put in place any recommendations and improvements.

As you can see from the work we are doing, tenant participation is a high priority. Pentland Housing Association values the views of our tenants and we can offer various opportunities to contribute to and influence decisions allowing you to become involved as much or as little as you would like.

For further information on how to become involved or to put your name forward please contact the Housing Manager, Carol Treasurer on carol@pentlandhousing.co.uk or phone 01847 807113.



Universal Credit is the new benefit system replacing many of the current benefits and tax credits and it has started being rolled out in our area.

If you are of working age you can claim it whether you have a job or not.

When you are moved over to Universal Credit it will be a big change for your family's finances – so it is a good idea to make sure you are prepared for the switchover.

You will get one monthly payment for all benefits at once – so you may need to change the way you manage your money each month.

You may need to take a look at the way you budget? When do you pay your bills? How do you pay them? Will you need to make any changes?

The Money Advice Centre and Shelter both have budget calculators which may help.

When you first claim Universal Credit you may have to wait over a month before you receive your money. You can apply for an advance payment but this won't cover the whole amount and you will have to pay it back. You will need to make sure you claim an advance payment within 21 days of making your Universal Credit claim.

Universal Credit will be paid directly into your bank account so you need to ensure you have an account that can receive universal credit. You may also need to

make sure you can pay your rent and other bills from that account.

Under Universal Credit, payments to help with your rent will be paid directly to you and not to your landlord.

Universal Credit is claimed and managed online. Pentland Housing Association Ltd have a computer available for use, free of charge, for this purpose. You will have to log in to your universal credit account regularly to check your messages and to update your records. You will also be expected to communicate with the jobcentre on line, as well as attending appointments at the jobcentre.

If you have any concerns about Universal Credit please do not hesitate to contact your Housing Officer to discuss it further. We would welcome early engagement with you to help you through these changes.

<https://gingerbread.org.uk/content/1938/Getting-ready-for-universal-credit?gclid=EAlaIqObChMlo9L0t4DF1gIV773tCh2b2wOPEAAAYASAAEqJfavD BwE#UniversalCredit>

Information has been sourced from the Gingerbread website, address provided above.

Are you struggling to pay your rent?

Useful Telephone Contact Numbers

Emergency Repairs
07802 930 685

**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

Money Advice Service
0808 800 0118

Winter Debt



Are your debts increasing?

**Have your benefits reduced/stopped because
of changes to the benefits system?**

Any other money worries with Christmas coming?

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 to 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. **The service is completely confidential.**

If you are interested in seeing Jennifer, please contact your Housing Officer who will be happy to refer you:

Making Advice Work (MAW) Project; part of the Scottish Legal Aid Board Grant Funding Programme

Your Housing Officers



Fiona Jack, Lisa Cormack, Yvonne Gunn, Carol Treasurer

Fiona:@pentlandhousing.co.uk

Yvonne@pentlandhousing.co.uk

Lisa@pentlandhousing.co.uk

Carol@pentlandhousing.co.uk

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BEAT DOORSTEP CRIME

THINK

Be on guard if someone turns up unexpectedly.

Be aware of methods they will use to distract you such as being asked to make a telephone call, to use your toilet or for a glass of water.

Don't keep large amounts of money at home.

SECURE

Use a door chain or bar.

If you don't have a chain check from a window who is at the door.

Install a security spy hole.

Keep rear, side doors and windows secure as someone could gain access while you answer the door.

QUESTION

Ask for ID, whether you are expecting someone or not.

Don't assume the caller is genuine just because they are wearing a uniform.

Ask a friend or neighbour to be available to help.

Obtain a written quote for any work.

BEAT DOORSTEP CRIME



Think

Expecting someone?
Only let callers in if they have an appointment.



Secure

Use your door chain / spy-hole before opening the door.



Question

Ask for callers I.D.
Verify by phone.
But if in doubt, keep them out.



scotland.police.uk @PoliceScotland PoliceScotland

Police Scotland have asked us to warn householders to be on the lookout for bogus callers.

Bogus callers try to get into your home or obtain personal details by pretending to be someone they're not, for example meter readers or charity workers but in reality they are criminals trying to steal cash and valuables

Rogue traders usually cold call offering to make repairs or carry out work on your house, garden or driveway. In reality they charge inflated prices for shoddy or often completely unnecessary work.

Never let someone you don't know into your house. If you are not sure don't answer the door.

For further advice please contact Trading Standards or the police on 101.

If you feel unsafe or threatened contact the police on 999.

Emergency Out of Hours Service

Phone 07802 930 685

Recycling and Refuse Collections Guide

If your bin is damaged or missing the Highland Council will replace it free of charge.

They can provide you with 1 additional green bin and 1 additional blue bin if your household has 6 or more people living in it, or where you need additional bins due to a medical condition.



recycle for Highland
an-chuairich airson na Gàidhealtachd

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Recycling and Refuse Collections Guide

Please use your blue recycling bin for:

Paper	Cardboard	Plastic bottles, pots, tubs, trays	Food tins, drink cans, aerosols	Food & drink cartons
				
<small>(rinsed & tops off)</small>	<small>(rinsed & tops off)</small>	<small>(rinsed & tops off)</small>	<small>(rinsed & tops off)</small>	<small>(rinsed & tops off)</small>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Papers / magazines ✓ Unwanted mail ✓ Phone directories ✓ Greetings cards ✓ Shredded paper ✓ Catalogues ✓ Envelopes (excluding windows) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cereal boxes ✓ Cardboard boxes ✓ Egg boxes ✓ Toilet / kitchen roll tubes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Milk bottles ✓ Fizzy juice bottles ✓ Water bottles ✓ Detergent bottles ✓ Toiletory bottles ✓ Food trays / punnets ✓ Yoghurt pots etc. ✓ Margarine tubs etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Food tins ✓ Fizzy juice cans ✓ Beer cans ✓ Pet food tins ✓ Aerosols (empty, tops removed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Juice cartons ✓ Milk cartons ✓ Soup cartons
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Remember all items must be:

- ✓ **clean**
- ✓ **dry**
- ✓ **loose**



Please do NOT put these in your blue bin

- Glass
- Black plastic food trays
- General waste
- Plastic bags
- Food waste
- Plastic film
- Unclean items
- Polystyrene

Other recycling....

- Use Recycling Centres to recycle electrical items, wood, clothing & shoes, garden waste, and much, much more.
- Please recycle your glass bottles & jars at your nearest Recycling Point or Centre.
- Donate unwanted household items to charity – call the National Reuse Phone Line on 0800 0665 820 for larger items.

Your refuse bin....

- Excess waste will not be uplifted, all waste must be contained within your wheeled bin and the lid must close.

For more information about recycling please contact:

☎ 01349 886603 ✉ recycle@highland.gov.uk 🌐 www.highland.gov.uk/recycle

Lighting

Types of lighting the council maintain -

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street lights • School 20 mile per hour signs • Illuminated traffic signs • Traffic signals • Navigational lights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illuminated bollards • Pedestrian and zebra crossings • Car park light • Floodlighting schemes installed by us • Christmas lighting installed by us |
|---|---|

To report a flood, faulty light or damaged road, contact the council on:

01349 886601

If possible, please get the code from the badge on the lamp post



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www.pentlandhousing.co.uk



Pentland
community enterprises

Factoring

We are now providing a factoring service for approximately 90 properties throughout Caithness. We provide a service to inspect the properties, administer repair works and give advice.

Mid market rentals

Our mid market rental properties are allocated, however if you are interested in future properties in this sector please contact the office to complete an application.

Garages

A selection of garages are available throughout Thurso. Further information is Available at 01847 892507

Parking Bays

We are continuing to develop parking bays throughout the garage sites. If you would like a secure, off road parking bay near you please get in touch. If a garage site can accommodate a parking bay we will be happy to discuss this with you. Parking areas have ample area space to store boats, caravans, trailers etc.

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

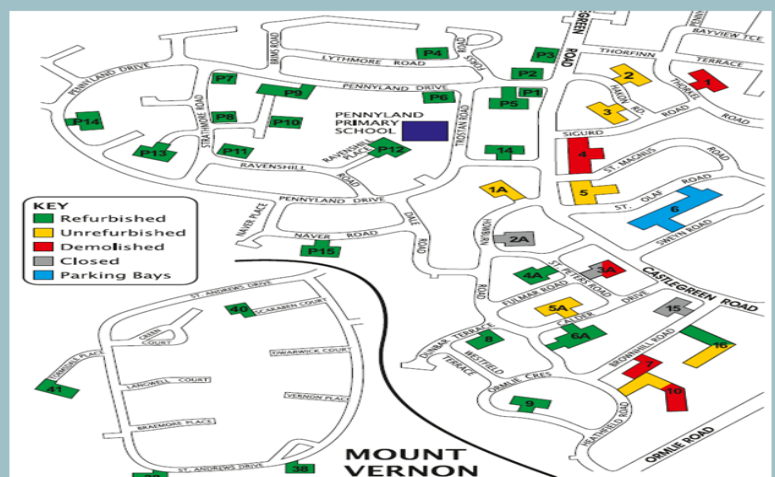
Get a guaranteed space
Secure parking
Off road parking

For more details call the admin team for PCE on

01847 892507 option 1

Or

Email on
PHA@PentlandHousing.co.uk



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PENTLAND ENERGY ADVICE



LOTTERY FUNDED



Our 2 energy advice projects are on going. Both concentrate on home visits to try to help reduce energy consumption in properties. Our 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. In the last few months we have had one new member join the team in June 2017. Charlotte Mackay, Energy Advisor, is employed by the Money Matters Project.

MONEY MATTERS

Calling all Pentland Housing Association tenants..
We are here to help.

Do you need advice or help on:

- * Running cost
- * Energy bills
- * How to set up a heating programmer
- * How to save on your hot water costs
- * How to save on your energy costs
- * The best tariff for your heating type
- * How to take correct meter readings
- * Reduce mould and condensation
- * Available grants

Don't delay, get in touch today!

Charlotte Mackay
 Energy Advisor
 01847 807104



charlotte.mackay@pentlandenergy.co.uk

Calling **ALL** householders who would like **FREE** draught proofing measures fitted and energy advice.

Draft Busting Caithness

We can fit:

- Immersion tank jackets
- LED bulbs
- Window/door draught proofing
- Loan an energy cost monitor to help you see where your energy is being used

We are funded by **The Climate Challenge Fund** so the above services are completely **FREE**.

For further information please contact Paul Bremner on 01847 807116

Or by email – paul.bremner@pentlandenergy.co.uk



Paul Bremner
 Energy Adviser

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www.pentlandhousing.co.uk

- Windy
- Winter storm
- Cold
- Flurries
- Blizzard
- Foggy
- Forecast
- Freezing
- Rain
- Frost
- Hail
- Ice storm
- Icicle
- Icy
- Rainy
- Sleet
- Whiteout
- Slush
- Snow
- Chilly

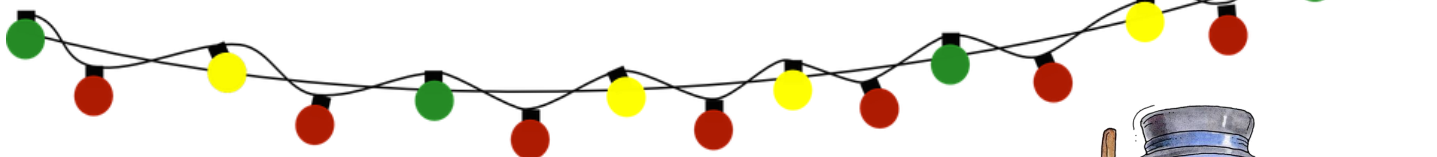


CHARITY UPDATE

Our fundraising total since July is £674.80. We are still collecting coppers and have a Strictly sweepstake running. This month, we will be wearing our Christmas jumpers on the 1st and you can watch out for our cheeky elf who will be hiding in our window display, he's on the move so you'll need to have a look for him every day!

OFFICE HOURS

During the festive season, the office will be closed at 12.30pm on Friday 22nd December and will re open on Wednesday 3rd January at 9am. For any emergencies please phone **07802 930 685.**



We would like to thank our customer's, contractors, and staff and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



**Emergency Out of Hours Service
Phone 07802 930 685**