




Pentland Press Summer 2018

Look out for
our new format for the Christmas
2018
newsletter!

<p>Pentland Press</p> <p>Pentland Housing Association Ltd 37-39 Traill Street Thurso Caithness KW14 8EG Tel: 01847 892507 Email: pha@pentlandhousing.co.uk Web: www.pentlandhousing.co.uk A registered Scottish Charity SCO 0037286</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chief Executive's Letter</p> <p>Welcome to our Summer 2018 Edition of Pentland Press.</p> <p>The newsletter is prepared for our tenants, customers, members and stakeholders.</p> <p>I hope you find it interesting and informative. Please let us know if there is anything you would like included in future editions.</p> <p>We would like to encourage as many people as possible to attend our Annual General Meeting, which you can find details about on</p> <div style="text-align: right;">  <p>Richard Armitage Chief Executive</p> </div> <p>page 4. We will have a guest speaker and a prize quiz. There will be an opportunity to speak to Board members and staff. I hope have an enjoyable Summer and look forward to meeting you at the AGM.</p>																				
<p style="text-align: center;">CONTENTS</p> <p>Page 2— CEO's letter and Progress Figures Page 3— Board Membership and Policy Updates Page 4— AGM Page 5— Tenant Participation Page 6— SLAB and Save for Christmas</p> <p>Page 7— Benefits Calculator and Dog Fouling Page 8— Our Power Page 9— Replacement Programme and Estates Maintenance Page 10 to 12— Technical Tips Page 13— PCE and PEA Page 14— Charity Update and Important Information</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">See How We Are Doing..</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The below figures are from 1st January 2018 to 31st March 2018</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Number of Properties</td> <td style="text-align: center;">494</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Tenant Arrears</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5.34%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Properties Let (Average turnaround is 32 days)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">11 Properties re-let to new tenants</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Mutual Exchanges</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Abandonments</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Emergency Repairs (Average completion time is 2 hours)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">70 Jobs 100% on time</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Routine Repairs (Average completion time 8 days)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">399 Jobs 92% on time</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Repairs Compete First Time</td> <td style="text-align: center;">91.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Gas Services</td> <td style="text-align: center;">99.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Stage 1 & 2 (Resolved on time)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1 100%</td> </tr> </table>	Number of Properties	494	Tenant Arrears	5.34%	Properties Let (Average turnaround is 32 days)	11 Properties re-let to new tenants	Mutual Exchanges	0	Abandonments	0	Emergency Repairs (Average completion time is 2 hours)	70 Jobs 100% on time	Routine Repairs (Average completion time 8 days)	399 Jobs 92% on time	Repairs Compete First Time	91.8%	Gas Services	99.7%	Stage 1 & 2 (Resolved on time)	1 100%
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Office Opening Hours:

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

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PHA Board Members

Andi Wakeman
 Bob Bell
 Colin Earnshaw
 Jim Hair
 Colin MacDonald
 Ian McElroy
 Gavin Powell
 John Perry
 Ellaine Forbes

Audit Committee

Jim Hair
 Elaine Forbes
 John Perry
 Neil Robertson

Staffing Committee

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



The Board of Directors are made up of volunteers of which there should be tenant representation. As at 1 June 2018, 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 2 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**

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



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Annual General Meeting



Come along to our Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, 19th September 2018 | 6:00 pm | Pentland Hotel,
Thurso

Guest speaker to be announced and a prize quiz for all will follow the AGM.

Board Members are to be elected at the AGM, for more information on this please read below.

Please note: If you are unable to attend the AGM and you are a member of the Association you MUST send your apologies, according to the rules.

“Your membership of the Association will end and the Board will cancel your share and record the ending of your membership in the Register of Members if for 5 annual general meetings in a row you have not attended, submitted apologies, exercised a postal vote or appointed a representative to attend and vote on your

Board Member Elections

Nominations for elections to the Board must be in writing and in the form specified by the Association which must give the full name, address and occupation of the Member being nominated. A Member cannot nominate himself/herself for election to the Board.

Nominations must be signed by and include a signed statement from the Member being nominated to show that they are eligible to join the Board in accordance with Rules 37.4 and 43, and that they

are willing to be elected.

Nomination forms can be obtained from the Association and must be completed fully and returned by hand or by post to the Association's registered office at least 21 days before the general meeting (Wednesday 29th August 2018).



Andi Wakeman, (Chair)

For further information please contact one of the following:

Andi Wakeman

Chair

chair@pentlandhousing.co.uk

Richard Armitage

Chief Executive

richard@pentlandhousing.co.uk

Rachel Harness

Corporate Officer

rachel@pentlandhousing.co.uk

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Working With Tenants

In February our tenant review group was back in action and held a meeting to meet the new Estates Manager. The group were given information relating to what the association is looking to achieve over the coming months regarding the issuing of our maintenance contracts. Over the next few months we hope to meet with the group on a regular basis to enable us to incorporate any recommendations and improvements made by the group.

The area of repairs to your home is one of great importance to all of our tenants and if you would like an input to how we move forward with the maintenance please contact your Housing officer, any member of staff or the Housing Manager on the contact details below.

We held our annual rent consultation in January and February with the information leaflets on the proposed increases being issued in January and our One 2 One meetings with tenants held at the beginning of February in both Wick and Thurso. All comments and concerns were forwarded to the Management Board before they made their final decision on the increase to be applied.

Pentland Housing are members of the Tenant Participation Advisory Scheme (TPAS) an organisation to promote and support tenants to participate and currently we hold a silver award in their Accreditation Scheme.

This scheme details a process for assessing how well organisations involve tenants in their services. At the start of the next financial year we are scheduled to apply for re-accreditation as any award only applies for a period of three years, the new application will involve the submission of documentation to support our application and a visit from TPAS to speak to tenants and staff forum groups



As detailed in earlier newsletters we will be resuming the 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.

As you can see from the work we put into tenant participation 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.

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Scottish Legal Aid Board—Making Advice Work

Do you need ANY of the following debt and finance advice?



- Managing rent payments and avoiding falling into arrears
- Managing personal debt
- 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

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.

Save for Christmas

It's a good idea to save ahead for Christmas. Dedicated Christmas savings schemes can help you to avoid dipping into your cash too early and make sure you have enough money up-front to pay for gifts, food, and drink. But there are other ways to save too. The following schemes are available to help you better manage your money and save for Christmas.

- Christmas clubs
- Other ways to save for Christmas
- Credit unions
- Bank and building society savings accounts
- Cash ISAs
- Supermarket savings schemes
- Christmas savings action plan

For further advice on the above schemes or other free and impartial money advice please contact or look up the Money Advice Service.

To read the full article by Money Advice Service, go online to www.moneyadvice.org.uk/en/articles/christmas-savings-clubs-and-schemes



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Welfare Reform/Benefits Calculator

An independent calculator can be used to find out what benefits you could get, how to claim, and how your benefits would be affected if you start work.

These are free to use, anonymous, and have replaced the Benefits Adviser service.

Calculators use one of the following:
Policy in Practice - for information on income-related benefits, tax credits, contribution-based benefits, Council Tax Reduction, Carer's Allowance, Universal Credit, how these are calculated and how your benefits will be affected if you start work or change your working hours.

Entitled to - for information on income-related benefits, tax credits, contribution-based benefits, Council Tax Reduction, Carer's Allowance, Universal Credit and how your benefits will be affected if you start work.

Turn2us - for information on income-related benefits, tax credits, Council Tax Reduction, Carer's Allowance, Universal Credit and how your benefits will be affected if you start work or change your working hours.



What you'll need

Accurate information about your:

- savings
- income, including your partner's (from payslips, for example)
- existing benefits and pensions (including anyone living with you)
- outgoings (such as rent, mortgage, childcare payments)
- council tax bill

Who can't use them

You can't use the calculators if you're under 18, and they won't give accurate results if you're:

- a prisoner
- a student
- not a British or Irish citizen
- on strike
- living outside the UK
- living permanently in residential care or a nursing home

This article was taken from the Government's website on understanding universal credit and can be found at

www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk

If you would like any further help to access these services, please contact your housing officer.

Dog Fouling

We all want to live in a clean and healthy environment however dog fouling remains a problem in our community and poses a serious health hazard.

The law states that it is an offence for the person in charge of a dog to leave its mess without removing it. The police and authorised local council staff will issue a fixed penalty notice if you fail to pick up.



If you are a dog owner please ensure you -

Lift it – Keep a supply of bags in your pocket and pick up your dogs mess.

Bin it – If there is not a specific dog waste bin available put in any public litter bin.

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OurPower

making energy fairer



Who are Our Power?

Our Power are a not-for-profit energy supplier, set up by progressive Scottish social housing providers to make energy fairer and reduce levels of fuel poverty.

They aim to offer more affordable energy, excellent customer service and never charge exit fees, so you're always in complete control.

Our Power currently has 58 housing associations and local authorities as members, including Pentland Housing Association.

Tariffs

Everyone can switch to Our Power, not just social housing tenants, and they offer three simple tariffs to choose from:

Our Best Energy Tariff

This is Our Power's lowest-cost tariff. With Our Best they offer one fair price for all customers – whether you choose Pay As You Go or Direct Debit.

*based on +IMPACT dual fuel rate with a consumption of 3100kwh electric and 12000kwh gas

Our +IMPACT Tariff

+IMPACT is Our Power's 100% green electricity tariff. On average customers will benefit from annual savings of around £80*, compared with big six standard variable tariff. All money raised through +IMPACT won't be handed to shareholders but will be reinvested in communities that need it most. For every customer that switches to +IMPACT, Our Power can offer an affordable tariff for a lower income or fuel-poor household to help them heat their home for an extra 54 days.**

Our Take Control Tariff

Their Take Control tariff has been specially designed for customers previously stuck on restricted meters, such as Total Heat Total Control in North Scotland or ComfortPlus in South Scotland. As part of their mission to make energy fairer, Our Power has priced their Take Control tariff to offer great rates that we believe could make a real difference to your energy bills.

You can find out more about Our Power's tariffs and make the switch to a fairer supplier by visiting our-power.co.uk or by [calling 0808 189 3085](tel:08081893085).

**based on the average saving in days that could be generated for direct debit and pre-pay customers currently paying for gas on a big six standard variable tariff (54 days)



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Planned Replacement Programmes 2018/19

We have a continuing programme of major replacements which are selected through a process of assessment — allowing for age and condition of the kitchens, roofs, boilers, and external doors.

Kitchens— There are 32 kitchens scheduled to be replaced in 2018/19, these are currently being identified and notification of those being replaced will follow. This programme will run for approximately 30 weeks.

Roofs— There are 12 roofs scheduled to be replaced at various properties, these will be assessed on a priority basis. This programme is expected to run for approximately 20 weeks.

External Doors— An inspection of failing external doors will be carried out and replacements made on a priority basis across the estate, a budget for 30 to be replaced has been set.

Boilers— There is an on going programme for the replacement of any boilers that fail. Our annual servicing programme will commence in April 2018, you will be contacted by phone or letter requesting 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 assistance please call our maintenance team.

Electrical Testing— The programme for electrical safety inspections commenced on the 14th August 2017 and is on going. All properties scheduled for an inspection have been notified and the electrical contractor will make contact with you to arrange access to carry out these inspections.

External Painting— A timber painting programme has been scheduled over the next 3 years, the programme will be carried out on a priority basis and start in June.

Cyclical Maintenance— Gas/oil boiler servicing, electrical testing, and ground maintenance, ongoing programmes in place.

Reactive Maintenance— Day to day reactive repairs and void repairs.

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.



Estates Maintenance

Our Grounds Maintenance contractor will be cutting the grass and tidying beds across the estate. Your garden will also need maintenance; they should be free from litter, household rubbish and not overgrown. Hedges need regular trimming and shouldn't grow over neighbouring gardens or public paths and grass should be cut regularly.



Pentland Housing Association does 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 the 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 carried out via a summer work programme running from the end of March to the end of October.

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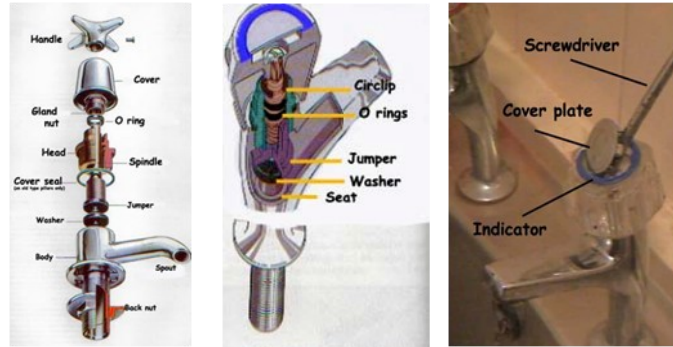
Ten Technical Tips for Maintaining Your Home

Taps

A dripping tap is a sign that you may need to change a washer. Here are some diagrams from an online DIY website (diydoctor.org):

“First, turn off the water and, if it an upstairs tap, open one of the taps downstairs to drain the pipes: The principle of "tap operation" is the same with most taps and the diagrams below can be referred to for the names of various parts.

Online search engines can give details to help you: “To change a washer in a mixer tap,



use a screwdriver to gently lift off the cover underneath the tap. Remove the screw exposed by turning it anti-clockwise then the handle will lift clear. Remove the cover by turning anti-clockwise and the head gear will be exposed. Un-tighten the head gear nut and remove the head gear to replace the washer. When done, replace all the covers and nuts into place and tighten back to the respective places.”

Windows

Keep your windows clean and check they are working smoothly on a regular basis. Remember when cleaning the frames and glass to use warm soapy water not abrasive cleaners. Keep the built in drains clear of debris to allow them to do their job. Inspect the seals and treat them carefully to make sure they don't become damaged or dislodged. Now that the better weather is upon us and you want to open your windows, it's a good time to lubricate your hinges and give them some care to make that a bit easier for you (use a 3-in-one oil).



Toilet Seats

Repairing or replacing a toilet seat should be another relatively simple job. If you need to buy a new one, remember to check that you get the correct size or fitting to replace it to ensure the best result and fit.

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Glass Breakages

For safety, we suggest that if a breakage occurs you should cover area with cardboard (eg cereal box) and/or tape the crack to stop the glass from falling and to make it safe for people in your home. Remember to protect your hands.

Door Locks

If your key is sticking in your lock or it is becoming hard to use, oily lubricants are not always the best to use. You can purchase reasonably priced “graphite powder” from a hardware shop which you dip your key into and then insert the key into the lock to work it into the system. Alternatively rub an ordinary pencil over the key (except for the part you hold or your fingers will end up black!). This may be enough graphite to transfer to the lock and lubricate it enough to work better.



Condensation and Mould

ensure all vents are free from obstruction and open, open windows to allow your home to breathe and let air in to all rooms, regulate heating to ensure the least condensation occurs and remember that if you have clothes drying in the house the water has to go somewhere! Clean down any mouldy areas and if required, redecorate with a fungicidal paint to reduce recurrence.

Electrics

If you are having trouble with your electrics tripping, the first thing you should do is unplug everything and then put them back one item at a time to see if it is an appliance which is causing the trip. It is necessary that you do this, as if PHA receive a report of a problem with electrics and it turns out to be your own appliance, then you would be liable for the repair costs and the contractors fees.

Gas Supply

If you have a paycard/pay as you go type meter, remember to keep it topped up. If the meter runs out of credit it stops the gas supply to the boiler. If you try to relight it in this situation it puts a strain on the gas igniter and the boiler components which may mean that parts need to be replaced. Please try to avoid this happening as recharges could be incurred in cases of neglect.

Door Handles

Keep your door handles lubricated with 3-in-one-oil, to ensure that their working life is as long as possible.

Sink Blockages

To avoid blockages in your sink, there are a few hints and rules that Scottish Water suggest in their recent leaflet “Always working so the cycle never stops” and on their website www.scottishwater.co.uk/cycle as follows:

“Fat, oil and grease in liquid form may not appear to be harmful as they don’t get stuck in the plughole, but as they cool they all congeal, harden and stick to the inside of drains and sewers, which can cause drains to block, flooding you and your neighbours.

Did you know? It is an offence under the Sewerage (Scotland) Act 1968 to dispose of fat, grease or oil down your sink.

Your Kitchen Checklist:

Fat, oil and grease - leave to cool and then scrape into a sealable container and put it in the bin.

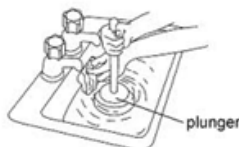
Give plates, pots, utensils and containers a quick scrape or wipe with some kitchen towel before washing and use a sink strainer in the plughole to catch any bits of leftover food going down the sink.

Believe it or not soup, stocks, sauces and milk products all contain fat, which can also congeal and harden in your drains - leave these to cool/harden, scrape into a container and put them in the bin.

Peelings - put any waste food and peelings into your household rubbish.

Your Bathroom Checklist:

Never flush items - 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, etc”



unblocking a basin or sink

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Parking Solutions Available Now

Are you interested in getting your vehicle off the road and ensuring you are guaranteed a parking space?

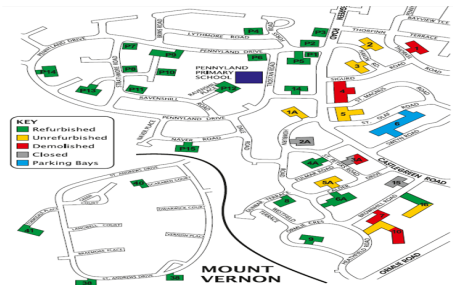


Garages

A selection of garages are available throughout Thurso. For further information call 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. Some parking areas have ample area space to store boats, caravans, trailers etc.



Pentland Energy Advice

Our two energy projects, Money Matters and Draft Busting Caithness and Sutherland, both carry out home visits with the aim to help reduce energy consumption in properties. They offer one to one support, evaluations of energy usage, capacity building in cutting down on energy use, and finding a cheaper method of accessing the energy required.

The Draft Busting Caithness and Sutherland project is available to any property in Caithness, while the Money Matters project is aimed at tenants of social housing throughout the Highlands.

Money Matters

Phil Croughton

Energy Advisor

01847 807104

phil@pentlandenergy.co.uk



Draft Busting Caithness

Paul Bremner

Energy Advisor

01847 807116

paul.bremner@pentlandenergy.co.uk



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Emergency Numbers

Caithness Citizens Advice Bureau -

Thurso 01847 894243

Wick 01955 605989

Caithness & Sutherland Womens

Aid - 0345 408 0151 (24 hours)

Crimestoppers - 0800 555 111

Domestic Abuse Helpline - 0800

027 1234

Emergency Services - 999 OR 112

(24 hours)

Free Money Advice - 0808 800 0118

Highland Council Service Point -

01349 886 606

Housing Benefit Enquiries - 0800

393 811

Money Advice Service - 0808 800

0118

National Gas Helpline - 0800 111

999 (24 hours)

National Power Cut Helpline - 105

(24 hours)

NHS 24 - 111 (24 hours)

Northern Constabulary - 0845 603

3388

Pentland Housing Emergency

Repairs - 07802 930 685

Police Scotland - 101 (24 hours)

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service -

01382 835 804

Scottish Water - 0800 0778 778 (24

hours)

SEPA Floodline - 0345 988 1188 (24

hours)

Transco Gas - 0800 111 999

Universal Credit Helpline - 345 600

0723

Staff Fundraising

PHG Staff take part in fundraising events every month. We share money raised with local as well as national charities. We pay a small fee to be out of uniform on Dress Down days, and purchase baking made by other members of staff. We also donate time or items to raffles and collections. We have raised a total of **£9335.65** in money and donations of items overall.



We raised money for Caithness Klics to spend on games for the children to play on the Nintendo Switch.

Dress down day for DEBRA

A charity which supports people with skin conditions

Staff sold lucky squares in the office to raise money for Cancer Research

We are looking for suggestions for our next event. Let us know if you have something you would like us to raise funds for or if we can help to raise awareness of an issue you care about.

KEY DATES

Staff Training Dates (closed 9am to 1pm)

Wednesday, 27 June 2018

Wednesday 15 August 2018

Wednesday 3 October 2018

Wednesday 14 November 2018

Wednesday 19 December 2018

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