

On Your Doorstep

Big hearts with a red twist

With the British Heart Foundation celebrating its 50th year, the staff at Glen Housing helped celebrated and fundraised by inviting tenants to a tea party with a 'red' twist at the office at Heimdal Gardens on Friday 25th February.

SEE MORE INSIDE ON PAGE 7



Meet Fei

– our new housing trainee

In May, the Association welcomed Fei (pronounced Fay) Zheng on a three-year Housing Officer traineeship. Fei came to us through the Positive Action Training in Housing (PATH) Scheme, which provides training for people from minority ethnic communities.

Originally from Beijing in China, Fei came to the UK to study Construction at Loughborough University, got a job in Glasgow with a 'green energy' company, married a Scot – and now works with us!

Fei works 4 days a week at Glen with 1 day per week at University to

study for the Professional Housing Qualification. Fei will become a familiar figure as she learns to deal with all aspects of the Association's housing service.



What's
growing in
your garden?

Check page 6

CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Wildlife Thrives | 2 |
| Rent – the latest | 3 |
| Your Radio Stars | 5 |
| Fun, Fun, Fun | 5 |

For up to the minute information, phone us on 01592 621188

If you go down to the woods today... or the wildlife garden... You're sure of a big surprise!!!

The Wildlife Garden at Magnus Drive, Glenrothes, gives valuable hands-on learning for the children of Collydean Primary School. How vital it is that children get to understand and appreciate their natural environment? That's why Glen continues its support to the Garden.

Elsbeth Killin, the Wildlife Gardener runs the classes for the School and After School Club. She reports on recent goings-on!

Primary 7 pupils from Collydean Primary School got a few surprises on 27th May – when they organised and took part in a Litter Action Day in and around the woodland at Magnus Drive Community Park. As well as the 'expected' litter – cans, bottles and plastic, they found bicycle wheels, burned out wheelie bins, a boot (just the one), broken toys and a bed spring!

The newly spring-cleaned woodland is now ready for children's environmental activities and for a new bluebell wood we'll establish in Autumn.

Please help us and Keep Collydean Tidy.

The wildlife garden is flourishing and about to explode into its summer colour.



This owes a lot to the work of P4/5, P5 and P5/6 pupils who have cleared areas, kept down plants that want to take over and grew and potted plants for the School Fair on Saturday 18th June.

P3 pupils have been nature detectives – with botany activities on plant parts and how plants grow. P6 planted willow and dogwood bushes around the woodland – we hope to use these for our craft activities. They also planted wildflowers around the area, and created an excellent box garden.

As part of Herbal Medicine Awareness Week in June – P4 will be making potions. P1 and P2 will enjoy activity days at the garden. These will stay a surprise!

'Take a Pride in Glenrothes' planted trees with 'Collydean After School Club' (around 30 children) and the Neighbourhood Centre now has a fantastic new fruit, vegetable and flower garden.

A huge thanks for donated tools. Any large plant pots? We'd love to hear from you. Want to volunteer at the garden? Please pop into Glen Housing or speak to the wildlife gardener.

Rent review 2011... and beyond?

By Anne Dickie, Director.

A big thanks to those tenants who returned their comments to the Association's Annual Rent Review at the end of last year.

As you will know, after managing to keep down our rent increase in 2010 to 1%, an increase of 4% was implemented from April 2011.

Even after a 4% increase, Glen's rent is amongst the lowest of the Housing Associations in Fife. It remains a principle aim to continue to keep our rents affordable.

At the same time, we have to keep the houses maintained to the highest possible standard. To do this, Glen has put money aside from rents paid since the Association was formed in 1993 – this is towards larger replacement items like kitchens, boilers, windows, doors etc. This is on top of what we budget for

each year for day-to-day repairs to our houses. A VAT increase earlier this year has added to the cost of our day-to-day repairs and our replacement programme. We also have to meet increases in National Insurance, pension contributions and higher loan costs for building new housing stock – or should we make the decision not to build anymore at the moment? In addition to all of the above, we are likely to incur extra costs to meet new regulations to be introduced over the next few years.

Unfortunately all this points to the possibility that Glen's rent reviews during the next few years may continue to result in increases of between 3% and 5%.

Skipping Success

In March, the Association announced a "waste amnesty" and placed 12 skips throughout the estate in Collydean. This was to allow tenants to get rid of unwanted items and mainly to get rid of garden rubbish. What then happened is that people appeared to have a Spring clean of their houses as well... bikes, mattresses, furniture, broken toys – you name it, it was in a skip somewhere!

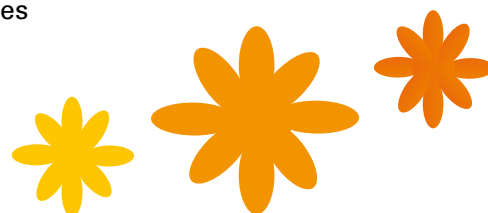
We did this as a trial in Collydean. You told us it was a great success. That's why we will arrange another "waste amnesty" in Leven shortly. We may even make this an annual event.

Tai flowers at Glen

"I loved my work experience placement with Glen. I learned so much and made many friends." So said Tai before she went on to a new job after spending a few months with the Association. Tai who hails from Northern Thailand and now lives in Fife, came to Glen through Fife Works, a scheme for people coming out of college training, which gives

them the opportunity to gain work experience.

Office manager Karen, commented "the placement worked out very well for both of us, and I am really pleased that through this experience with Glen Tai managed to get a permanent job".



Glen helps Fife Youth Radio take to the airwaves...



Fife Youth Radio (FYR) is a new online radio station broadcasting to the worldwide web, set up by a number of young people from the Leven area and co-ordinated by 17 year old Ricky Williamson.

It's aim is for young people to listen to their kind of music and find out what's going on in their area. Ricky said, "Young people always complain about having nothing to do, well the aim of FYR is to change that and let everyone know how much is actually going on".

Glen has helped out the young people by offering them the use of one of the rooms in our Leven office to broadcast from. The roof of their original premises in Windygates collapsed.

FYR can also run training workshops in radio presentation and if any young people are interested – they can work towards running their own show on FYR.



Check out the FYR website at www.fyr.org.uk for further details and broadcasting times.

Problem of overhanging trees

Do you have tree branches hanging over your garden? While, the Association will not be doing any cutting back or pruning during the summer we will start a fairly major tree thinning and pruning programme in the autumn.

Meanwhile, if any overhanging branches or shrubs are causing you a problem you can lightly prune back any coming into your garden during the summer.



Magnus Drive Annual Fun Day

Friday 1st July 12.30 – 3.30pm

Come along and enjoy bags of 'fun.' Here's just a taster.

- Inflatables
- Face painting
- Balloon moulding
- Magician
- Football competition
- Stalls
- Wildlife Garden activities
- Burger van



Praise for 10 years of service

Senior Housing Officer, Isobel Muirhead and Estates Caretaker, Phyllis Malcolm both celebrated 10 years at the Association with a gift voucher and written appreciation for their efforts from Chair, John McArthur who said, "Isobel and Phyllis have given fantastic service to Glen

over the years doing entirely different jobs but both making extremely valuable contributions to the smooth running of the Association".



Annual garden competition

**C'mon all you green fingers...
get your gardens tip-top
for judging during week
commencing 25th July 2011.**

This year, we are particularly keen to look at the growing number of communal areas where neighbours have got together to brighten up their drying greens with flowers and shrubs.



Grass cutting service

If you struggle to keep your garden in spruce condition, why not join the Association's Grass Cutting Service?

It costs around £12 a month with payment made in advance

Contact Pat or Karen at the office to find out more.



Continued from page 1.

For a small donation, tenants and callers to the office were able to sample home baking, enter a prize draw for a hamper overflowing with goodies – there was also a ‘guess the heart throb’.

Many thanks for your generosity. You helped raise a fantastic £247.30 for a great cause.



Improvements on the way

Here’s our proposed Planned Maintenance works for the next couple of years. Finer details may change, but we will keep you updated and contact you well in advance of work starting.

2011/12

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|----------------------|
| Wilmington Drive, Collydean | – | Kitchen Replacements |
| Various | – | Boiler Replacements |

2012/13

| | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| Balmaise, Leven | – | External Paintwork & Smoke Detectors |
| Durie Street & High Street, Lower Methil, Chestnut Crescent, Castlefleurie | – | External Paintwork |
| Arbaile, Groban, 1 – 17 Grunnan | – | Kitchen Replacements |
| Various | – | Boiler Replacements |



Go ahead for Glen at Milton of Balgonie

Glen is due to go on site in June this year with a 13-house development in the village of Milton of Balgonie.

This development is being built through our partnership with the Fife Housing Association Alliance. Kingdom Housing Association will oversee the building work before handing it over to Glen at completion around June 2012.

We will be building:

2 x 2 bedroom wheelchair bungalows

5 x 2 bedroom bungalows

4 x 2 bedroom houses

2 x 3 bedroom houses

If you live in a property that's currently too large for you why not think about "downsizing" to one of properties mentioned above. Please call and speak to Isobel to find out more.



Keep Home Possessions Protected

Home Contents Insurance can protect your belongings in event of burglary, fire or flood and for a small addition to the premium, accidental damage.

Housing Association tenants have exclusive access to SFHA Diamond Insurance Scheme arranged by Scottish Federation of Housing Associations with Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance plc. The Policy is designed to cover tenants for major events such as fire, flood. It also covers liability to third persons and for tenants' own responsibility under

the tenancy agreement, such as broken glass or lost keys.

Home Contents Insurance can be purchased for as little as £2.93 per week, or £3.90 if extra Accidental Damage is included and there is no excess to be paid, on any claims. This is a feature very unlikely to be available in the open insurance market.

Full details and an application form are available from Glen's offices. Just state the value of the items you wish to cover and sign the form. We are happy to help you and post the form on your behalf. From then, you will deal directly with the Insurance Company.