1st April 2020

Dear tenant/member

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

As you know, we have had to react to a constantly changing position over the last three weeks as a result of the fast pace of the Covonavirus, COVID-19 national position and pandemic. Even by the time our Newsletter and letter dated 16th March 2020 hit your doorsteps, so much had changed. And this will be the case for some time to come. We are aware that we have been updating our website and social media platforms but many of our tenants remain without internet. So this letter is an update on our position and enclosed is a Frequently Asked Questions sheet that we hope you will find useful.

We would of course encourage all our tenants and members to:

Follow the Government guidance to stay at home; wash your hands regularly with soap; and keep apart from family/friends not within your immediate household.

Follow the Government guidance if you still need to work

Follow the NHS guidance if you fall ill; and particularly those over 70 years and with underlying health conditions – phone 111 if you need assistance.

As all our customers will know we closed our office to the public on Thursday 19th March 2020 and it will remain locked up until we are told it is safe to return. All our staff, with the exception of our Handyperson service, is available by phone. Most have access to our computer system remotely so can continue to provide you with the essential information you need. We appreciate that this is far from the service you have received in the past but we are reacting to Government guidelines to provide services only where this is safe to do so. Many of our contracts have been suspended meantime.

For our sheltered tenants, our housing support assistant is also available by phone and I understand is keeping in touch with tenants. The local authority has confirmed it is a priority to maintain services to those that need it most.

For those faced with unemployment, our staff are here to support you through the online Universal Credit system and will provide you with the help you require. We of course will be sympathetic to individual situations and you will get the support you need to ensure your rent is paid.

As indicated, the enclosed FAQ should provide you with more advice and information, so please keep in touch. Clearly in some cases we will not be able to provide a full service as our staff are required to stay at home but we will offer telephone advice during normal working hours and if staff are not available, we will phone you back.

Please also remember that there are volunteers in the community offering to provide help – please get in touch with Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire Community Hub Monday – Friday, 10am-3pm on 0141 876 9555 or email hello@va-er.org.uk if you need advice and support.

We will keep tenants informed and hope to write out again soon with further information. Our Governing Board will be required to look at our position at some later point and make strategic decisions but now is not the time to do this.

Please also note that our Chief Executive has decide not to retire just yet and we will re-assess this at some later point when able to do so. It will be the Board intension to recruit a new Chief Executive when this is possible.

In the meantime, please stay safe and well.

Yours sincerely

David McCready

Chairperson

Barrhead Housing Group