



SUMMER EDITION

2023

Intro

It is an exciting time for Homes for Life, with the launch of our Facebook page in April, our new website, and Tenants Portal earlier this month and reopening of our office in Haddington to tenants and the public on Monday the 21 August 2023. The team have also moved to hybrid working and have a couple of new additions, Agnieszka Malek joined us in May as Maintenance Admin Assistant and Paul Fear at the beginning June as our Compliance Officer.

Work to fully modernise HfL's 4 one-bedroom and 4 two-bedroom properties above our office in Market Street is approaching completion. These properties which are suitable for couple and single person households and will be advertised in These Homes later this month.

This year's AGM will take place on Wednesday the 20 September 2023 at 6:30pm at the Tweedale Arms, Gifford. To mark our 25th anniversary, there will be a celebratory event to which all tenants will be invited prior to the AGM between 4pm and 6pm. Keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for event details.

I hope you enjoy reading this year's Summer Newsletter. We would love to hear your feedback and ideas for future editions.

Gill
CEO



Office Opening Hours

Monday	9am – 4:30pm
Tuesday	9am – 4:30pm
Wednesday	12noon – 4:30pm
Thursday	9am – 4:30pm
Friday	9am – 3:30pm

Public Holiday Closures

15th & 18th September 2023
25th December – 3rd January 2024

***We are closed for training every
Wednesday 9:30am – 12 noon.**



Equality, diversity & inclusion

Improving diversity, equality and inclusion is key to Homes for Life's approach to delivering services. To be successful, we need to know and understand our current and future tenant base to be best able to respond to current and future tenant needs. We have a duty to collect equalities data and take it into account in everything we do including our tenant participation strategy. The collection of equality data is critical to the effective implementation of this strategy and the delivery of our services.

We therefore plan to issue an equalities survey to all tenants, board members, and our team, in the autumn with the aim of using the data to promote strategies on customer care, equality, and tenant participation. We will issue the questionnaire online through our Tenant Portal, and there is also the option to complete and return a paper copy or answer the questionnaire over the phone. We hope as many people as possible will complete the survey.

Yester Estate tree works at Walden Place & Walden Terrace, Gifford

We are pleased to notify our tenants in Gifford that The Yester Estate have been in touch to advise they have commenced a tree cutting programme at the rear of Walden Place and Walden Terrace, where tenant gardens back on to the Estates property. These works are intended for the removal of the overhanging branches in your gardens. Please be mindful of your safety while these works are carried out. We would ask for your cooperation in working with the Estate where needed, for example with access to the trees and keeping clear of restricted working areas. Please feel free to contact a member of the team should you have any questions about the tree works.



Emergency Out of Hours Numbers

Non-Gas Emergencies – R3
03000 999 247

Gas Repairs/Air Source Heat Pump Repairs – Lothian Gas
0131 440 4666

If you think you can smell a gas leak, **NEVER** attempt to find a gas leak yourself. Instead contact **NATIONAL GRID** immediately on the following number – **0800 111 999**



Grounds Maintenance

Following tenant feedback from June this year we have introduced 3 weekly grass cuts and the removal of grass cuttings. This change along with a new grounds maintenance programme which will be in place by the end of the summer should ensure that your garden and park areas are kept to a good standard.

Cyclical & Planned Maintenance

Gutter Cleaning

We are reviewing our gutter cleaning programme. Currently we carry out an annual gutter clean. In response to recent feedback an additional gutter clean will be carried out over the next two months. We will publish on our new website in August.

External Painting

Is now underway in the following locations:

- Roodlands Court – Haddington
- Forth Street – North Berwick
- St Andrews House – North Berwick
- Hares Close and Barga Court - Cockenzie

If your home is part of this year's programme you will receive a letter from us detailing which external areas of your home will be painted, with the commencement and expected completion dates. We will publish details on our new website in August.

Kitchen & Bathroom Replacements

This year's kitchen and bathroom replacement programmes are also underway. 35 kitchens will be replaced in Gifford and 10 bathrooms at Macfarlane Court in Elphinstone. If your home is part of this year's programme you will receive a letter from us with details soon.

Play Parks

During the summer months routine maintenance and painting works will be carried to each of our play parks.

Garden & Pot Plant Competition 2023

As summer is now here, this seems like a perfect time to launch our annual **Garden Competition**. Last year 20 tenants entered the competition.

The competition is open to all our tenants and our factored owners. You can enter your own or nominate a neighbour's garden and pot plants.

This year we will be giving out prizes for the **Best Garden Display and Pot Plant display**. Judges will be out visiting nominated gardens the week beginning 14th August. The winner from each category will receive a £50 supermarket voucher and two runners up £25 supermarket vouchers.

Nominations can be received by email at info@homesforlife.co.uk and should be headed Garden & Pot Plant Competition 2023, with the name, address, and category.



CCTV and Video Doorbells

If you are considering installing CCTV or video doorbells in your home, it is important to understand how they can impact on others privacy as well as the law around their use.

Capturing images beyond the boundary of your home means that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applies to you. This means considering what you record, how any data is stored and informing others that their images are being captured.

You require permission from us to install any CCTV system. HfL will consider how you intend to use the system and for what purpose before granting approval. If you wish to speak to someone about installing CCTV, please contact Zoe Stevenson, Community Housing Officer.



Rent Consultation Survey 2023

Thank you to everyone who completed our survey on the proposed rent charges for 2022-23. The key feedback included:

1. My current rent, charged by HfL, is affordable?

Answer Choices	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	19.09%	21
2 Agree	42.73%	47
3 Neither agree nor disagree	21.82%	24
4 Disagree	12.73%	14
5 Strongly disagree	7.27%	8
	answered	110
	skipped	0

2. A rent increase of 4% (CPI less 7.1%) is

Answer Choices	Response Percent	Response Total
1 About right, and HfL has the right balance of rents, investment, and services	62.73%	69
2 Too low, and HfL should be investing more in homes and services	0.91%	1
3 Too high, and HfL should make further cuts to investment in homes and services	36.36%	40
	answered	110
	skipped	0

3. Do you get help towards paying your rent from Housing Benefit or Universal Credit?

Answer Choices	Response Percent	Response Total
1 No	64.55%	71
2 Yes, (partial Housing Benefit / Universal Credit)	10.91%	12
3 Yes (full Housing Benefit / Universal Credit)	24.55%	27
	answered	110
	skipped	0

4. For the rent you pay, do you feel that you get good value for money compared to other landlords, including the private sector?

Answer Choices	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Strongly agree	16.36%	18
2 Agree	37.27%	41
3 Neither agree nor disagree	24.55%	27
4 Disagree	15.45%	17
5 Strongly disagree	6.36%	7
	answered	110
	skipped	0



Your new Tenants Portal

We are now introducing your new Tenant Portal.

It is designed to make your life as a Homes for Life tenant easier. It is an online, one-stop place to organise and access all your tenancy services. Tenants Portal is secure and confidential and is available to you 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

A YouTube video explaining how to register and use the Tenants Portal can be found at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LgbAjxn_4QM

Once registered on the Tenant Portal you will be able to see information about your tenancy and at the same time carry out various tasks to keep your tenancy records up to date and communicate with us, including:

My Tenancy – to see information on your tenancy and calendar appointments.

My House – to see your repair history or report a routine repair.

My Account – to view your rent account and make a payment.

My Household – to tell us about changes in your household.

My Documents – recent correspondence from HfL such as rent increase letters.

My Calendar – scheduled repair appointments

My Messages – to send us a message.

My Feedback – to give us your views by completing surveys and questionnaires.



To set up your new Tenant Portal please call us so that we can set up an account for you.

Tenants Panel Vacancies

Do you want to be involved in helping to improve the services we provide... We currently have vacancies on our Tenants Panel.

Our Tenants Panel play a key role in helping us to review our services and to ensure that we are offering the best services we can to our residents.

If you are a good communicator and work well as part of a team then being a member of our Tenants Panel could be right up your street.

If this sounds like something that might interest you please contact HfL's Housing Manager, Donna Dougal by email at donna.dougal@homesforlife.co.uk or on **01620 829300**.



Residents asked about Nature Networks in their local park

What would you like to see in your local park to enhance nature?

Local residents are being given the opportunity to identify ways in which nature and biodiversity can be enhanced across East Lothian's parks and green spaces in towns and villages.

The Nature Networks East Lothian initiative aims to work with local communities to seek views on what people would like to see in their local parks and open spaces that would enhance their environment. Such changes can bring wide ranging benefits not just to nature, but also to the health and wellbeing of local communities whilst helping to tackle the climate emergency.

Scotland's Nature Agency, NatureScot, describes Nature Networks as: "A Nature Network is effectively just a network that connects nature-rich sites, restoration areas, and other environmental projects through a series of areas of suitable habitat, habitat corridors and stepping-stones. As well as supporting regional and national approaches to protect and restore nature, they provide local benefits to wildlife and people.

"To ensure Scotland's nature can thrive, nature-rich areas must be connected through a series of networks linking them all together."

Cabinet member for Community Wellbeing, Cllr Colin McGinn, said: "Earlier this year East Lothian Council was awarded £23,865 to support delivery of a nature restoration in parks action plan programme to improve Nature Networks for East Lothian's communities. This public consultation is the first stage in identifying where nature networks can be expanded into our urban areas closer to where people live.

"I would like to encourage residents, whether as individuals or members of interested groups, to take part in the consultation and provide their views on both current and future opportunities to enhance the natural environment in their local area."

In addition to the online consultation available on the East Lothian Council website at: <https://eastlothianconsultations.co.uk/infrastructure/nature-networks-parks-and-greenspaces> there will also be leaflets available to complete at all local libraries, Council Area Offices and Community Centres.

The £23,865 funding was from the Scottish allocation of the Levelling Up Parks Fund provided to the Scottish Government by the UK Government. Greenspace Scotland is managing the funds on behalf of the Scottish Government.



More on Nature Networks East Lothian at:
Nature Networks in our parks and greenspaces | Nature Networks | East Lothian Council

Cost of Living Grant Funding

Over the last few months, we were successful in obtaining two grants to assist with energy saving measures and fuel costs for our tenants.

We have been able to help 147 tenants who requested energy saving items including air fryers, heated clothes airer, thermal curtains, and energy saving LED lightbulbs. Some tenants have also received one-off fuel voucher payments to help with energy costs.

The remainder of our fund will be used to support our tenants who are experiencing fuel poverty or debt. Please contact us if you require any assistance.

Any tenant who did not receive an LED light bulb pack and would like one, please email info@homesforlife.co.uk with a heading stating LED light bulb.



Feedback from our tenants:

"The clothes airer came in handy helped through the winter months when normally difficult to dry clothes as have a family. Handy to get my son and daughter's rugby kits dry".

Roslyn

"Grateful with the money towards her electricity and enjoying using the air fryer".

Karen

"I am delighted with her air fryer and bulbs, thought the service was excellent. The money towards the electricity bill has been a great help".

Jeanette

"The duvet has been a great help, feeling cosy during the night. The money towards electricity was very helpful for me and my son".

Jill from Haddington

"I am pleased with my air fryer and is using daily. The money towards my energy bills was very much appreciated and helped with my winter bills".

Morag from Ormiston

Thank You!

Homes for Life would like to thank the family of Sam Higgins, former tenant of Haddington for the generous gift of items that were donated to a local charity that helps people who are starting up their first home.

Air Fryer Easter Recipes

Air Fryer Lemonade Scones

METHOD

1. Combine flour and sugar in a large bowl. Make a well. Add cream, lemonade and vanilla. Using a flat-bladed knife, gently stir until dough just comes together.
2. Turn dough out onto a floured surface. Knead gently for 30 seconds or until just smooth. Press dough into a 2.5cm thick round. Dip a 5.5cm round cutter into flour. Cut out scones. Gently press leftover dough pieces together and repeat to make 16 scones.
3. Place a sheet of baking paper in air fryer basket, making sure paper is 1cm smaller than the basket to allow air to circulate. Place 5 or 6 scones, almost touching, on paper in basket. Brush tops lightly with milk. Cook on 160*c for 15 minutes or until golden and hollow-sounding when tapped on top. Carefully transfer to a wire rack. Repeat 2 more times with remaining scones and milk.
4. Serve warm with jam and whipped cream.

INGREDIENTS

- 525g (3 1/2 cups) self raising flour
- 70g (1/3 cup) caster sugar
- 300ml thickened cream
- 185ml (3/4 cup) lemonade for dusting
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- Milk for brushing
- Raspberry Jam - to serve
- Whipped Cream - to serve



INGREDIENTS

- 4 Egg Whites
- 215g (1 cup) Caster Sugar
- 1tsp Cornflour
- 1tsp White Vinegar
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- Cadbury Caramilk Chocolate, peeled into curls - to Serve
- Raspberries - to Serve
- Whipped Cream - to Serve

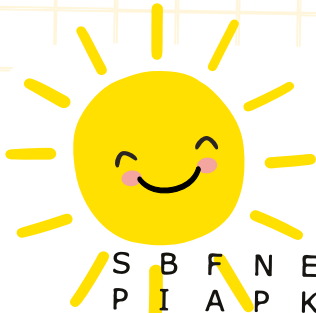


Air Fryer Pavlova

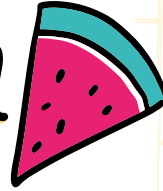
METHOD

1. Use electric beaters to whisk the **egg whites** in a clean, dry bowl until firm peaks form. Add the **sugar**, 1 tbsp at a time, whisking constantly until the mixture is thick and glossy. Add the **cornflour**, **vinegar** and **vanilla** and beat until just combined.
2. Tear two 38cm sheets of baking paper. Spoon the mixture onto one sheet of baking paper. Use the back of a spoon to shape the meringue into an 18cm disc. Make an indent in the centre. Place the remaining piece of baking paper into the air fryer basket. Carefully lift the baking paper with the meringue into the basket, placing the paper at right angles to the first piece.
3. Air fry at 120°C for 30 minutes. Remove the air fryer drawer. Set the pavlova aside in the basket for 20 minutes to cool slightly before transferring to a wire rack (with the baking paper) to cool completely.
4. Use a large palette knife to carefully transfer the pavlova to a serving plate. Top with **whipped cream**, **raspberries** and **Caramilk**. Dust with icing sugar to serve.

Summer Wordsearch

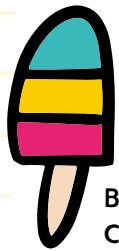


SUMMER Fun



WORD SEARCH

S B F N E L C A M P O U T P A K L J
 P I A P K H S E O N H M D R A F P Q
 D R N G X S U M M E R U U H M C X G
 V I P C M U T Y S U N S H I N E A U
 X Q E Q R B W Q W A T E R P A R K N
 S M O R E S A N D C A S T L E U G Z
 K F I R E W O R K S I A P G D N H Z
 N G W A T P J S W I M M R S I C F E
 B C A I T U Y U I W D Y I Z A T N C
 A K T B V K H N D I D P A E T R H O
 A K E S A L Q G X K U G B Q B O Z O
 H V R L C M Y L N D R R J Y S P Z K
 O H M L A Z Y A M A U L T E P I Q O
 Z I E W T I E S T A A R L U S C Z U
 C N L O I B W S K Z A C G P U A C T
 S A O G O U I E I P I K O Q N L I X
 V W N U N Q F S L S J L P O S Y R K
 J M O O V R V O P F F U K Y C T X H
 T G Q X U Q O O S P P D O F R P N N
 L G O S U P P L I Q Z K W M E C Q Q
 N K O S C R P L U B Z X W H E D O C
 W A E J S H F E D Z L E M O N A D E



BEACH
 CAMPOUT
 COOKOUT
 FIREWORKS
 FLIP FLOPS
 LAZY

LEMONADE
 POOL PARTY
 POPSICLES
 SANDCASTLE
 SMORES
 STARGAZING

SUMMER
 SUNGLASSES
 SUNSCREEN
 SUNSHINE
 SURF
 SWIM

TROPICAL
 VACATION
 WATERMELON
 WATER PARK



Summer Word Scramble

Summer is one of the four seasons and comes after Spring and before Autumn. It is the hottest season of the year. The Eiffel Tower grows in summer. On a hot day the iron from which it is constructed expands so much that the tower can rise by 17cm!

- teha _____
- smreum _____
- Indseaacts _____
- ssnhuein _____
- imws _____
- tuniosg _____
- sfru _____
- tna _____
- sepad _____
- nivigd _____

This Summer themed Word Scramble features 10 summer themed words which have been scrambled. See if you can unscramble them to see what they are.

Summer Colouring In



Homes for Life Housing Partnership

is a recognised Scottish Charity No 028542. Company Registration No. 188299.

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