



SCOTTISH BORDERS
TENANTS
ORGANISATION

giving Tenants a voice

SBHA
SCOTTISH BORDERS HOUSING ASSOCIATION

NEWS

Spring edition 2022



Photo by our competition winner, Fearne Miller, age 12

Get it Today!

The new SBHA Customer App
Available now!

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Jeśli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać kopię niniejszego dokumentu w formacie dużym drukiem lub w innym języku, prosimy zadzwonić pod numer 01750 724444

إذا كنت تريد نسخة من هذه الوثيقة بخط طباعة أكبر، أو كنت ترغب في تلقي نص الوثيقة بلغة مختلفة، فترجو الاتصال بالرقم 01750 724444

Inside

- *Information on your rent*
- *Join us on an estate walkabout*
- *Getting involved - something for everyone!*





Welcome!

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter!

With life returning to normal following Covid-19 and with restrictions being lifted right across the board we at Scottish Borders Tenants Organisation look forward to working with SBHA in a more traditional way - but still with the option of joining meetings online for those who would prefer to.

We are recruiting an Intern for our annual scrutiny project and we are excited to be supporting another young person as they embark on their career.

Along with this there will be a number of other activities taking place throughout the year, and I would encourage you to get involved with these. Some of these are fun including the gardening competition and photo competitions throughout the year. There are also other activities happening such as estate walkabouts - your chance to influence decision-making in your area.

We at SBTO are also looking for new members from right across the Borders - especially Hawick, Peebles, Earlston, Galashiels and Jedburgh. We welcome people of all ages, ethnicities and genders. Anybody wishing further information on this, please contact Tenant and Community Engagement Facilitator, Louise McNeilage (lmcneilage@sbha.org.uk) to arrange an online or in-person meeting. Myself or another SBTO member will also attend, to help answer any questions you may have. I hope to see many of you during the year.

Dominic Brookes, SBTO Chair & on behalf of the Editorial Panel

IN THIS EDITION



Julia Mulloy, Chief Executive

Following two years of Covid-19 the Scottish Government restrictions have now been relaxed. We plan to continue to keep you safe and will be continuing with health and safety measures when we visit your home.

Meanwhile, the war in Ukraine is leading to the biggest crisis seen in Europe since WWII. Housing Associations across the country are gearing up to help, and we know many Tenants are keen to offer up space in their homes to individuals and families who have fled the conflict.

Please remember you need your landlord's permission to do this.

Thank you Simon

Our thanks to Simon Mountford, who has stepped down from the Board of Management after almost 10 years of service.

Simon was Chair of the Board of Management from 2016-2021 - years which saw the development of SBHA's first new-build homes, as well as the modernisation of customer services, a greatly increased emphasis on Tenant engagement and stronger

There are lots of important reasons for this. For health and safety reasons we need to know who is living in your home; we also need to make sure you can accommodate more people without overcrowding. In addition, we may be able to support you and the Ukrainian families you are hosting at this challenging time.

It is impossible to predict what the outcome of this conflict will be. It may be that you might have your guests for a number of months, or even longer. It's vital that we make sure any homes offered are suitable, to minimise further upheaval for people who have already been through a very traumatic experience. As a potential host, you would also be required to undergo checks by Disclosure Scotland.

We know that many of you are keen to offer support, and we'll be sharing information on other ways you can do this, whether it's to help those who have fled, or those who are still in Ukraine.



partnerships with other organisations to help us meet increasingly complex needs.

We are very grateful to Simon for his service to the Association over the years, and we wish him all the best for the future.

NEWS

Cost of living

How our Team can support you



We know that money is a worry for a lot of people right now. Don't wait - if you're experiencing financial difficulties, it's really important that you talk to us. Last year we helped 699 people with financial worries - **we can help you too.**

We can help you to access any funds that have been allocated by the Scottish Government to help people through the current difficult times.

If you're struggling to make ends meet or facing a drop in income, we can also:

- ✓ Make sure you're getting all the benefits you're entitled to, and help you to apply
- ✓ Help you to agree payment levels on debt and arrears
- ✓ Help you find more affordable deals on, for example, phone contracts and bank accounts
- ✓ Help you to heat your home more affordably, by reducing your energy use
- ✓ Issue you with vouchers if you're on a pre-payment meter, and clear fuel bill arrears

We can support you for as short or as long a time as you need, but it's really important that you get in touch - don't let a problem become a crisis! Call 01750 724444, or email enquiries@sbha.org.uk, and ask for an appointment with the Team. For more on how we can support you, see page 10.

Information on your rent

We would like to thank the nearly 300 Tenants who took the time in January to speak to us about the rent you pay. Your views were then taken forward for consideration by the Board.

Our Business Plan had assumed a rent increase this year of Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%, but as CPI is 4.2%, this would have meant an increase of 5.2%. Instead, to keep rents as low as possible, we proposed the much lower, below-inflation increase of 3.8% (CPI less 0.4%).

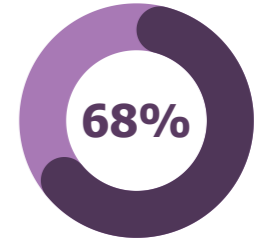
You told us.....



you felt the proposed rent increase was 'about right'



you feel your rent is affordable



you feel your rent is good value for money

Your rent pays for all of the services that we provide. Here's how we will invest this year. £10m investment in improvements to your homes and communities, key items include...



£1.5m for new fire doors
#KeepingYouSafe



£5.7m in planned upgrades in Tenants' homes



£475k on roads in footpaths over 5 years



£582k in environmental improvements, like gutter cleaning, bin stores & communal doors

Opportunities for young people

Supporting the workforce of the future



SBHA has signed up to the Young Person's Guarantee - a commitment by the Scottish Government to connect every 16 to 24-year-old in Scotland to an opportunity. This could be a job, apprenticeship, further or higher education, training or volunteering. For SBHA, it means a commitment to play our part in developing the future workforce, supporting young people in the earliest steps in their careers.

SBHA is supporting Modern Apprenticeships.

Kaitlyn Ogg joined SBHA in January as a Business Admin Modern Apprentice. "This Apprenticeship allows me to work full-time and study at Borders College too. During the year, I will be working in four different areas of the business, developing my knowledge in basic business administration skills and understanding the world of work. This is a great stepping stone for me - in the future I'd like to do a university course in Business Administration."



Our Spring photo competition - the winners!



Congratulations to our Spring Photo Competition Winners! Each one received an Easter Egg and a £20 voucher. The overall winner, whose picture is featured on our front cover, is Fearne Miller, aged 12.



The winner of the 17-24 category, with this lovely picture of Loch Skeen, is Cheyenne Hay.



The winner of the over 25s category is Erika Kilic with this gorgeous close-up of a bluetit. Thank you to everyone who took part!

Getting involved in your area

Meet your Neighbourhood Housing Officer

Our estate walkabouts are back! This is your chance to meet with your Community Team and talk to them about the improvements you'd like to see in your area. See our website, www.sbha.org.uk, for details of upcoming walkabouts. June's walkabouts are below.

Who is my Neighbourhood Housing Officer?

See <https://www.sbha.org.uk/about-sbha/whos-who/community-teams/>

Town	Date and time	Your Housing Officer	Areas & where to meet
St Boswells	1st June, 2pm	Jill Robertson	Braeheads Road etc. Meet entrance to Orchard Park.
Galashiels	2nd June, 1pm	Fiona Mallin	Church St. etc. Met at Church St.
Earlston	8th June, 2pm	Jill Robertson	Jesamine Cottages etc. Meet at entrance to North Summerfield.
Kelso	9th June, 9.30am	Helen Bulman	Horsemarket etc. Meet outside Rutherford Square.
Galashiels	9th June, 1pm	Fiona Mallin	Balmoral area. Meet at flats at Balmoral Avenue.
Hawick	9th June, 3pm	Beverley Richardson	Princes St etc. Meet at Dickson St. car park.
Yarrowford	15th June, 2.15pm	Susan Falconer	Meet at the car park.
Jedburgh	22nd June, 1.30pm	Guy Shillinglaw	Cairnmount.
Lauder and Oxton	23rd June, 2pm	Jill Robertson	Crofts Road etc. in Lauder, Heriotfield in Oxton. Meet at end of Manse Road in Lauder.
Langlee	29th June, 1.30pm	Kelly Mitchell	Lower Langlee. Meet at Winston Place.
Peebles	29th June, 2pm	Debbie Morrison	North Place and North Street
Burnfoot	30th June, 2.30pm	Kaye Forsyth	Leishman Place, Ruberslaw Road, Scott Crescent and Galalaw Road. Meet at Leishman Place.

Help us to keep you safe

The law around fire alarms has now changed - every home in Scotland is now legally required to have interlinked fire alarms installed to keep everyone who lives there or any visitors safe. We would like to thank all Tenants who allowed us access to carry out this essential work, allowing us to improve fire safety throughout our stock of 5,600 homes.

Did you know –

- we also carry out electrical installation condition reports. These checks ensure that your home is electrically safe. It's now a legal requirement that we carry these out every 5 years.
- if you have a solid fuel appliance, such as an open fire, multi-fuel stove or Charnwood heating stove, we also service this each year.

It's essential that you allow access for these checks. Our contractor will contact you with an appointment - if this is unsuitable, please contact the number on your appointment letter to rearrange. Thank you for helping us to keep you safe!

What's happening where

Welcome to your handy guide to what we're doing where - keeping you up to speed on where major investment is happening in the financial year 2022-23.

Bathrooms
70 homes in Kelso & surrounding
186 homes in Burnfoot, Hawick

External painting
129 homes in Bannerfield, Selkirk
333 homes in Peebles

New windows for 320 homes across the Borders

Various improvements to blocks, including security doors, new communal flooring, external painting and communal lighting.
57 homes in Galashiels

Kitchens
38 homes in Kelso & surrounding
108 homes in Burnfoot, Hawick

Gas heating replacements
54 homes in Kelso
35 homes in Burnfoot
39 homes in Central Hawick
51 homes in Jedburgh

Doors
100 in Kelso & surrounding
186 in Burnfoot, Hawick

See the table below for where major upgrade programmes are happening when. We will be in touch with you well in advance of any works taking place.

Location	Works due
Kelso & Hawick Burnfoot, Heiton, Morebattle, Smailholm, Sprouston, Town Yetholm, Ashkirk	2021-23
Hawick Central / West End & Jedburgh, Newcastleton, Ancrum, Bonchester, Denholm, Lilliesleaf, Newmill, Southdean	2023/24
Gala Central & Melrose, Bowden, Darnick, Gattonside, Clovenfords, Fountainhall, Stow, Traquair	2024/25
Selkirk & Hawick, Ettrickbridge, Yarrowford	2025/26
Peebles & Gala Langlee, West Linton, Broughton, Eddleston, Eshiels, Manor, Horsburgh Ford, Oxtan, Romanno Bridge, Skirling	2026/27
Gala North & Earlston / Newtown St Boswells, Maxton	2027-28



A new fitted kitchen

How do you decide whether or not I get a new kitchen?

Kitchens, bathrooms, boilers, heating systems and doors and windows all have an expected 'life' - this is how long we expect them to last. See the table on the right for information on the expected 'life' of each of these.

However, we do recognise that lots of things can affect how long your kitchen, for example, may last, so we carry out thorough surveys of homes in each area so that we can determine what's needed.

How many years do they last?

Bathrooms	25
Kitchens	20
Gas boilers	15
Full heating replacement	25-30 (depending on type)
Doors & Windows	30

Will I be offered a choice of fittings?

We will visit you to carry out a survey ahead of work taking place.

If you're getting a new kitchen, you'll be offered a choice of work surfaces, as well as cabinet doors and handles. If you're receiving a new bathroom you will have a choice of colours for your wall boards, as well as for your flooring. Tenants receiving new front doors will also be given a choice of styles and colours.

We will show you samples of these and will take a note of your choices at your home survey visit.

What do I have to do next?

If you live in one of the identified properties, you will have received a letter advising that your home is to receive upgrades in 2022-23, and what these are. We'll contact you again to give you 3 weeks' notice of work starting.

If you have any questions about this, please call 01750 724444 or email enquiries@sbha.org.uk.

It's important that we maintain Tenants' homes to a high standard. However, we appreciate that some people may be anxious about the disruption of having works carried out in their home. If this is the case for you, please get in touch.

We need you!

Scottish Borders Tenants Organisation

GETTING INVOLVED...



I really enjoy being involved with SBTO and have contributed to lots of activities to help improve SBHA's services and standards. I enjoyed holding the position of Joint Chair, and have now also joined SBHA's Board as a Tenant member. The opportunities for development with SBHA are brilliant - I would encourage you to get in touch! Call 01750 724444 and ask for Louise, or email lmcneilage@sbha.org.uk

*Tracey Glover,
SBTO & SBHA Board of Management*

DID YOU KNOW?

SBTO provide feedback to help SBHA to make decisions on services, policies, strategies, rent levels, investment in homes & more!

WHY GET INVOLVED?

- New experiences
- Meet new people
- Learn about housing & related issues
- New skills
- Have fun!



YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

During 2021-22 over 1k Tenants gave us feedback on surveys & consultations. Your voice matters!



Ready ... steady ... grow! SBTO Gardening Competition



Last year's overall winner, Liam Scott from Stonefield, Hawick

Yes, it's time to get your gardening gloves on again for SBTO's Annual Tenant Gardening Competition.

New for 2022 we're introducing a category for Best Food Grown in your garden or home, and we're really keen for as many people to get involved in this as possible.

Watch out for more details coming soon on our website and social media!

For tips on growing your own fruit and veg, as well as recipes and information about local growing projects, go to www.abundantborders.org.uk.

VOICES TOGETHER



Our Voices Together Strategy 2021-25, which supports Tenant engagement, is focused on:

- giving Tenants a voice through surveys and feedback opportunities.
- modernising our social media, webpages, and customer leaflets.
- helping Tenants to get online.
- creating more opportunities for Tenants and community groups to get involved with SBHA in all neighbourhoods.
- accessing funding to help increase engagement.

Options to suit you

Get Involved – Inspire Others – Make a Difference

Got a bit of spare time this Summer?



Would you like to help us make changes to benefit Tenants? Why not join a Customer Audit Team?

Since our Scrutiny project on Customer Complaints Handling in Summer 2021, SBHA has:

- improved communication with customers to keep them up to date.
- refreshed and modernised the 'Do you have a Complaint?' leaflet (left).
- updated the complaints page on our website to improve transparency.
- increased regular complaints handling training for teams.

Thank you to last year's CAT for making this all possible.



Got half an hour?



Meet your local Community Team for an estate walkabout and share your ideas for making your area better - keep an eye on our Facebook for walkabouts coming up near you soon.



Only got 10 minutes? No problem!



Keep an eye out for our surveys. Recently Tenants in Langlee took part in a digital survey to help us decide on the next steps for 'Love Langlee'.

More opportunities coming up in other areas soon!



Interested in getting involved and having your say in a way that suits you? Then contact Louise McNeilage, Tenant & Community Engagement Facilitator via email - lmcneilage@sbha.org.uk or call 01750 724444 for a chat.

Satisfaction surveys our lucky winners!

Thank you to everyone who took part in our recent satisfaction surveys, carried out by BMG Research. Your feedback helps us to improve services for all Tenants.

The prize draw lucky winners of the last two surveys are Mr & Mrs Keddie from Innerleithen and Mr George Mann from St Boswells – congratulations!!

More opportunities for young people

This Summer sees another brilliant internship opportunity for a student to join the Tenant Engagement and Communication Team as our Tenant Engagement Assistant, working for SBTO and with SBHA.

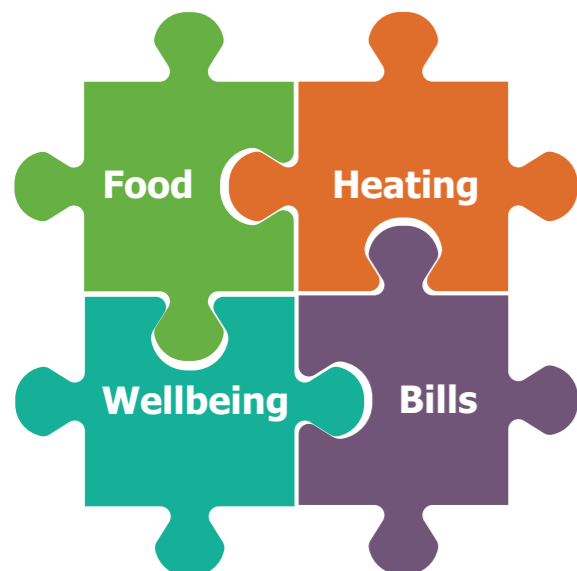
"I thoroughly enjoyed my placement and found working to improve Tenant satisfaction really rewarding. Everyone was really supportive and I built up lots of skills which now help me in the workplace and in my University course."

*Kirsty Westbury,
Tenant Engagement Assistant,
Summer 2021*



Tackling hardship together

SBTO and SBHA join forces to support Tenants



With energy bills, food and other household costs increasing, at SBHA we're determined to do all we can to help and support Tenants.

See our website for lots of handy information about what the dedicated SBHA Team can do to help you, from supporting with Benefit applications to helping you heat your home more affordably. We are also collecting together information about websites and agencies offering further help and support. As part of the campaign, we have invited SBTO members to share their own money-saving tips each 'Tip-Day Tuesday'. And we'll be heading out into the community to make sure we get the messages about the help available to as many people as possible.

Here's a taster of the information and advice we'll be sharing - keep an eye on our website and social media in the coming weeks for more!

Togetherall - online support for mental health

Could you use some support?

Togetherall is a safe, online community where people support each other anonymously to improve mental health and wellbeing. The site is run by trained professionals and accessible 24/7. You can also access articles, courses and advice on techniques to help you manage your mental health better.

The service is currently free everyone over 16 living within Scottish Borders postal code areas. For more information go to www.togetherall.com.

Worried about energy bill debt?

Are you worried about fuel bill arrears? Don't delay, as we may be able to help. We can also work with you to help make your fuel bills more manageable, so that your debt doesn't build up again.

To find out more about how we can help, contact us on 01750 724444 or email enquiries@sbha.org.uk and ask to speak to our Warm and Well Co-ordinator.

Tenant top tips - save money on your food shop!



Hello! I'm Tiffany Ward from SBTO. My top food tips and ideas have helped me save over half my food budget!

- ✓ Food price reductions happen at all supermarkets usually in the afternoon but Asda, Tesco and Marks & Spencer reduce food around 6pm. Asda sometimes do reductions at lunchtimes during the weekend so it's well worth keeping an eye on.
- ✓ You can also buy and freeze reduced bread, rolls and pastries.
- ✓ Dice up fruit and veggies and put them up and put them in food/freezer bags - that way you only use the portion size you need and save time in the kitchen too.

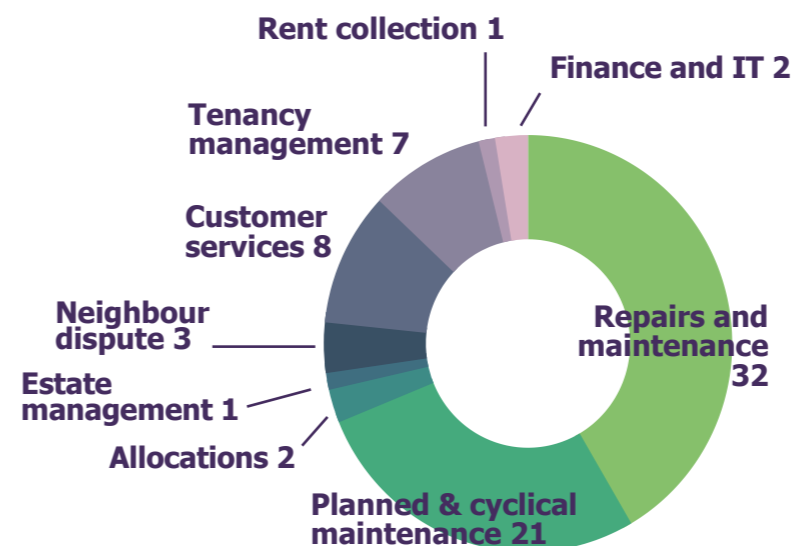
Do you have a money-saving tip that you'd like to share? Please get in touch with SBTO at lmceilage@sbha.org.uk and we'll promote your tips on Facebook and on our website. Let's support each other and tackle hardship together!

How are we doing?

Complaints info

Total complaints received	Oct-Dec 2020	Oct-Dec 2021	Improved
	78	77	😊

Complaints received by service area - Oct-Dec 2021



Complaints outcomes	Oct-Dec 2020	Oct-Dec 2021	Improved
Resolved	-	6%	😊
Not upheld	53%	36%	😞
Partially upheld (fm April 2022)	N/A	5%	N/A
Complaint upheld	47%	53%	😞
Average days taken to respond	Stage 1 - 5 Stage 2 - 17	5 16	😊
Responded to within required timescales*	74%	79%	😊

* Timescales for responding to complaints are set by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman - <https://www.spsso.org.uk/spsso>

	Oct-Dec 2020	Oct-Dec 2021
Tenants satisfied with overall service	78%	77%
Tenants satisfied with how they're kept informed	74%	69%
Tenants satisfied with opportunities to participate	65%	59%
Tenants satisfied with a repair they've had carried out in the last 12 months	84%	79%
Time taken to carry out an emergency repair	1.7hrs	1.9hrs
Time taken to carry out a non-emergency repair	5.5 days	9.5 days
Percentage collected of rent due	97.7%	97.3%
Days to re-let an empty home	73	34
Calls resolved at first contact	88%	89%

And finally...

Talk to us!



If you wish to see anything featured in future newsletters, want to give us some feedback on this newsletter, have a story or photo to share, or are interested in learning more about how you can get involved, please contact Louise McNeilage, Tenant & Community Engagement Facilitator.

Just email lmcneilage@sbha.org.uk or DM via any of our social media or call 01750 724444. Also, if you would like to receive this newsletter digitally, rather than in print, please let us know and help us to reduce our carbon footprint.

Look out for details of where you can meet up with us in your community soon!

Did you know...

We have more than 6,000 followers on social media!

It's a great way to keep up to speed with all the latest news, competitions and updates, as well as job opportunities at SBHA. Scan the QR codes below to go to our social media channels and website. We can also provide you with support to get online - call 01750 724444.



Opportunities to participate and influence decision-making at SBHA.

There are lots of ways to get involved at SBHA. Fourteen of them are hidden in this wordsearch. Can you find them all?

Send a picture of your completed wordsearch to jmcrobbie@sbha.org.uk by the 3rd of June for a chance to win a £20 voucher.

Words to find...

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| shareholder | SBTO |
| online forums | surveys |
| walkabouts | engagement |
| focus groups | CAT |
| roadshows | board member |
| socials | digital |
| meetings | scrutiny |

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

How many wee lambs did you spot? Let us know by the 3rd of June for a chance to win a £10 voucher. Send us an email at jmcrobbie@sbha.org.uk.



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