



summer 2024



**SBHA**

Delivering  
Excellence Together



Being  
Responsible



Always  
Improving



Everybody  
Matters



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[www.sbto.org.uk](http://www.sbto.org.uk)

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Welcome to the Summer edition of your Tenant newsletter.

As I write, we are celebrating SBHA and SBTO's joint success at the recent TPAS National Good Practice Awards - SBTO members Margaret Graham and Dominic Brookes attended the awards with SBHA's Chief Operating Officer Maria Lyle (pictured on the front cover) You can find out more about this on page 5.

We can achieve so much more when we work together. This Summer, Tenants are once again working with the SBHA Team to scrutinise and suggest improvements to a service. We are focusing on repairs, and we really appreciate your feedback, so please take the time to give us your views - just a few minutes out of your day will help us to make improvements for all Tenants.

We look forward to seeing you this Summer, on our Summer Roadshow!



Gordon Saunders,  
SBTO Chair, on  
behalf of the  
Editorial Panel



Julia Mulloy, Chief Executive

In this issue, we've devoted a page to our plans to increase the supply of affordable housing here in the Borders, as well as how we're listening to you to make improvements to your services.

You may have noticed in the Spring edition of the newsletter that the word 'sustainable' had begun to feature a lot. With over 5,600 homes across the Scottish Borders we have a clear responsibility to reduce our carbon footprint in order to play

our part. Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time. Finding ways to mitigate its effects in a way that impacts Tenants and communities positively, is the key to securing a better future for ourselves and for future generations.

You'll find more about this, and what we've already achieved, in this issue. And please take a few minutes to give us your views in our Tear off and Tell survey on the back page.

And speaking of future generations - we are also committed to supporting young people and helping to build the future workforce - find out more on page 7.

It's an exciting time to be a part of SBHA! See page 5 for info of how you can contribute by joining our Board.

*Best wishes, Julia*

## Save the Date - SBHA's AGM

**SBHA's Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 12th September 2024 at our Head Office in Selkirk, from 6.30pm.**

**You need to be a shareholder to attend, so if aren't already a member and would like to become one, please get in touch by emailing [enquiries@sbha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sbha.org.uk), or call Freephone 0800 0193 222.**

## Enjoy your retirement Margaret!

It is with a mix of gratitude and sadness that we bid farewell to Margaret Ramage, who retired recently after 26 years of dedicated service to the Tenants at West Port, Hawick.

We wish you all the best for your well-deserved retirement Margaret!





## Meeting housing need

The Scottish Government recently declared a national housing emergency, formally recognising the problems with housing supply in Scotland. All new affordable homes are subsidised by Housing Association Grant from the Scottish Government but we are currently operating in an increasingly challenging funding environment. There is less grant available, costs are higher and we face greater levels of demand than ever.

We are determined to do everything we can to continue to deliver new homes. This is an essential part of our response to the housing emergency and also supports the local economy with jobs in the construction sector. The homes we are building are all highly energy efficient and include renewable technology to help keep running costs low.



## New homes in Hawick & Newtown St Boswells

We are delighted to be on site building 16 new homes in Burnfoot, Hawick (above). These range from 1 bed to 4 bed, and include some single-storey homes for those with limited mobility. The work is progressing well, with completion expected in early 2025.

Our commitment to meeting housing need drives us to innovate. A great example of this is at Whitefield Crescent, Newtown St Boswells (left), where work is well underway reconfiguring eight low-demand bedsit flats to create four 2-bed family homes. This development re-uses much of the existing structure, minimising the environmental impact.



## New homes planned for Selkirk



Thank you to members of the Selkirk community who joined us at our Head Office recently for our pre-planning consultation on proposals to build new homes at Linglie Road in Selkirk. Your views have helped to inform our planning application, which will be submitted to SBC later this Summer.

With more than 300 people waiting for a home in Selkirk, we know how vital these new homes are. We look forward to bringing you more news on this exciting development as this progresses!

## Homes for key workers

To address the urgent housing needs in our community, we have been exploring innovative ways to expand our housing supply. One successful strategy has been purchasing nearly 30 homes on the open market in recent years, bringing these up to our lettable standard before offering them to Tenants.

Some of these properties have been designated for Mid-Market Rent, a scheme designed to provide high-quality, affordable homes to rent for people on low and modest incomes. In our allocations, we have prioritised essential workers, including social care and health workers. This approach ensures that those who play vital roles in our community can afford to live and work in the Borders.



## SBTO's AGM

This year's Scottish Borders Tenants Organisation's Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday 22nd October at 6.30pm, at SBHA's Head Office - South Bridge House, Whinfield Road, Selkirk.

All are welcome - for more details or if you would like to attend, please contact Louise McNeilage, Tenant and Community Engagement Facilitator, at [communications@sbha.org.uk](mailto:communications@sbha.org.uk)

## Tenants shaping services

This Summer SBTO's Customer Audit Team (CAT) is undertaking its 9th Scrutiny project. This year, they will be looking at SBHA's Repairs Standard.

We know that our Repairs Service is one of the most important services we provide, so it's vital that we get it right. The CAT, with the support of our Tenant and Community Engagement Facilitator and Tenant Engagement Assistant, Alex (right), will be contacting and having discussions with some Tenants who have had repairs carried out recently.

We would really appreciate you taking the time to share your feedback.

If you have any questions, please contact us on [communications@sbha.org.uk](mailto:communications@sbha.org.uk)



Hello, my name is Alex Rogerson, and I am thrilled to join SBHA as their new Tenant Engagement Assistant. I am currently enrolled at the University of Aberdeen, going into the 4th year of my Scots Law degree after the Summer with aspirations to pursue the commercial side of law.

I enjoy playing football, and play for the University of Aberdeen Law Football Team. I also enjoy watching boxing and MMA events, having competed in such sports in the past.

I am really looking forward to getting to know everyone and working together.

Best regards, Alex

## SBTO Gardening competition

Is your garden ready?

Our judges are out and about this month, deciding on this year's winners for overall Best Garden, Best Container Garden, Best Window Box, Best Food Grown in Garden or Home, and Best Amenity Garden. And this year we have the brand new category of Most Improved Garden! Winners will be announced in our Autumn newsletter. Good luck to all those who have entered!

Last year's overall winner, Steve Dunn, is pictured above receiving the Eric Kelly award.





## TPAS Awards - we're winners!

We are absolutely delighted to have received two awards at the recent Tenant Participation Advisory Service (Scotland) National Good Practice Awards.

As well as winner of best practice in 'Communicating with Tenants and Residents', SBHA and SBTO were also runners-up in best practice for 'Involving Tenants in Shaping and Scrutinising Services.' This recognition is testament to the valuable partnership between SBHA, SBTO and Tenants.

A huge thank-you to all Tenants for getting involved and contributing to help us continuously improve our services, and a special thank you to SBTO for their unwavering commitment to ensure that Tenant voices are heard and acted upon.

### Commenting on this fantastic result, Dominic Brookes (Joint Vice-Chair of SBTO), said:

*"We are delighted with these achievements. Neither would be achievable without the time and effort put in by both SBHA, SBTO and equally importantly, you the Tenants of SBHA. Every time you get involved, whether with your participation in Scrutiny projects or your interaction with social media posts, you are playing a part in making positive change. We hope you will continue to make a valued contribution and get involved in any way you feel you can. If you would like to learn more about what we at SBTO do or ways you can get involved, please get in touch!"*

## Join our Board

Are you passionate about housing and committed to making a meaningful difference to people's lives and communities?

We are looking for a Tenant to join our Board. Our Board has a vital role in setting the vision and shaping the strategic direction of SBHA, driving continuous improvements to meet customer needs and expectations.

This is an exciting time to join the Board, as we form our Strategic Plan for the next 5 years and as a Tenant, your unique perspective is incredibly valuable. So, if you share our vision and values, and this opportunity is of interest to you, we would love to hear from you.

We strongly encourage applications from diverse and under-represented groups. We believe that a Board reflective of our community's diversity

brings richer perspectives for decision-making. Everyone, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, or background, is welcome to apply.

To find out more about this exciting opportunity, please contact our Governance Officer, Catriona Notman, on 01750 724444, or email [Board@sbha.org.uk](mailto:Board@sbha.org.uk)

Find out more about the benefits of getting involved: Board and SBTO member Tracey Glover recently spoke to TPAS about her experiences, and her passion for ensuring Tenants have their say. You can read the article here: <https://tpasscotland.org.uk/a-day-in-the-life-of-scottish-borders-tenant-tracey-glover/>





## Sustainable investment

As well as new build, improving our existing homes is key to our Net Zero future.

### Energy-efficient homes



We've been working hard to improve the energy efficiency of homes. More than 98% of our homes now have an energy efficiency rating of Band D or above. In the last 6 months alone, from having 229 homes that have an energy efficiency rating below Band D, we now have only 71. We are now planning for how we will get these remaining homes to up to Band D.



We have been working to ensure that homes are able to conserve heat as much as possible, as well as looking at more sustainable heating solutions, for example Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) and solar panels.

We recognise that renewables technology is always evolving, and we are asking for feedback from customers with ASHPs, to ensure that we're able to identify the best solutions.



### Playing our part in the sustainable economy

As part of our journey to Net Zero, we are encouraging our contractors and suppliers to also commit to reducing their environmental impact. Our new kitchen supplier uses only sustainably sourced timber, and their supply chain is committed to recycling products for other raw materials.

It's not just about the materials we use - we have also ensured that:

- None of the homes we build after April 2024 will have gas boilers
- Biodiversity commitments have been built into our grounds maintenance contract

We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint, and will look to reduce business travel wherever we can, without compromising on service.



Before and after - a newly fitted kitchen in an SBHA home

Have you had a letter advising you that we need to carry out a survey in your home? It's really important that we're able to access your home to carry this out, so that we can get the information we need to deliver updates to your home when they are needed.

If an appointment for a survey of your home isn't suitable, please let us know. We'll be happy to arrange an alternative date and time that better suits you.

And some feedback from a happy Tenant!

“ I would like to take this opportunity to thank your employees for a fabulous job installing my new bathroom. I am utterly delighted with it. You have made me very happy and can't tell you how pleased I am with your attention to detail and with the finished job. ”



## Developing the workforce of the future

We're committed to developing the future workforce - working with partners to support young people to develop the skills they will need in their future working lives.

We recognise that inequality of opportunity can begin before people enter the workforce. We recently took part in a brilliant two-day event, organised by Developing the Young Workforce Borders (DYW), Scottish Borders Council, and Skills Development Scotland, to help young carers and care-experienced people explore a range of transferable skills.



## Community Partnerships



Recently, our Chief Executive, Julia Mulloy engaged with local businesses to share experience and ideas around engaging the young workforce at DYW's annual Celebration Event.

Members of the SBHA Team along with representatives from SBTO recently took part in Borders College's Community Fair, held in celebration of the College's 40th Anniversary. Here's to many more years of a great partnership!



## Supporting young people - skills in schools!

We also value our partnerships with local High Schools. We are proud to have joined Hawick High School's Employer Partnership Board, establishing sustainable links between local employers and the school.

Members of our team recently ran communication skills workshops as part of the S5 and S6 induction days at Hawick High School. Students participated in a range of exercises requiring effective use of all forms of communication to ensure successful team collaboration and problem-solving.



You said

We did

Photo: ILF Imaging



## Communities together

We are committed to working with communities to enhance the areas they live in and create great places.

Responding to suggestions from local Tenants and residents, SBHA recently teamed up with Waverley Housing, local Councillors, and enthusiastic community members to organise a litter pick event at Stonefield, Hawick. This successful event was more than just a cleanup; it was a collaborative effort to enhance the local environment and strengthen community bonds, bringing together people of all ages to achieve this shared goal. Thank you to everyone who took part!

**Interested in joining our next community initiative or sharing your ideas for enhancing your local neighbourhood? Join us on our next estate walkabout in your area.**

YOUR AREA	Neighbourhood Housing Officer / Property Officer	Date & time
Galashiels - Galabank St, Hill St, Huddersfield St, Croft St.	Fiona Mallin / Greig Murray	August 1st, 1pm. Meet at top of Croft Street flats.
Hawick - Mansfield area	Clair Forrest/ Ryan McGee	August 7th, 2pm. Meet at the junction of Mansfield Road and Gardens.
Selkirk - Bannerfield	Scott Ramage / Colin Sandilands	August 14th, 11am. Meet at the Bannerfield shop.
Hawick - Burnfoot (Church Lane, Hillend Drive, Charles St., McLagan Drive, Borthwick Road, Fraser Avenue)	Kaye Forsyth / Ryan McGee	August 14th, 11.30am. Meet at the Church Lane car park.
Kelso - Berrymoss and Sydenham Court	Stacey Aitken / Damian Annan	August 15th, 10am. Meet at the entrance of Berrymoss Court.
Selkirk - Buccleuch Rd area	Scott Ramage / Colin Sandilands	August 21st, 1.30pm. Meet at the rear of Buccleuch Road.
Hawick - Stonefield / Liddesdale	Clair Forrest / Ryan McGee	August 21st, 2pm. Meet outside B1 Stonefield.
Stow / Fountainhall	Lindsay MacFarlane / Clark Durnion	August 21st, 11am. Meet at Cockholm Crescent junction
Selkirk - Elm Park area	Scott Ramage / Colin Sandilands	August 26th, 1.30pm. Meet at the top of Elm Park.
Upper Langlee	Kelly Mitchell / Greig Murray	August 28th, 1.30pm. Meet Hawthorn Rd car park.
Jedburgh - Priors Road, Meadow Court, Headrig, Forthill Terrace area	Guy Shillinglaw / Jonathan Mellars	August 28th, 1.30pm. Meet at the children's playpark on Priors Road.
Newcastleton	Susan Falconer / Ryan McGee	August 29th, 9.30am. Meet in car park, centre of village.
Galashiels - Forest Road, Forest Avenue, Forest Gardens, Forest Hill.	Fiona Mallin / Greig Murray	August 29th, 1pm.
Hawick - Churchill Road and Branxholme Road	Beverley Richardson / Jonathan Mellars	August 29th, 2.30pm. Meet at the car park at the top of Churchill Road
Lauder / Oxton	Jil Robertson / Colin Sandilands	August 29th, 2.30pm





## Join us at the Summer Roadshow!

Have your say on our future plans by joining us on our 2025 Summer Roadshow!

We are currently working on our future plans for SBHA, developing our new 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, setting our goals and the steps we will take to achieve them over the next five years. Your insight and experiences are invaluable to help shape this Plan.

Please come along to meet the team at one of our scheduled community events (see the programme below) and help us to create a plan that reflects yours and your community's needs and aspirations.

**SELKIRK - Wednesday 14th August 1pm – 3pm**  
Katy's Kitchen, Philiphaugh Community Centre,  
2 Linglie Road, Selkirk

**ST BOSWELLS - Thursday 15th August 3pm – 5pm**  
St Boswells Church Hall, Main Street, St Boswells

**HAWICK - Friday 16th August 1pm – 4pm**  
Hawick Business Centre, 10-12 Oliver Crescent, Hawick

**INNERLEITHEN - Tuesday 20th August 4pm – 6pm**  
The Vale, 2 Leithen Crescent, Innerleithen

**ONLINE via Microsoft Teams - Wednesday 21st August 6pm – 7pm**  
Please email [communications@sbha.org.uk](mailto:communications@sbha.org.uk) to register for the link

**NEWCASTLETON - Thursday 22nd August 11am – 1pm**  
Copshaw Kitchen, 4 North Hermitage Street, Newcastleton

**JEDBURGH - Friday 23rd August 1pm – 3pm**  
The Jed Eye, 11 Castlegate, Jedburgh

**NEWTOWN ST BOSWELLS - Tuesday 27th August, 9.30am-11.30am**  
Newtown Community Wing, Sprouston Road, Newtown St Boswells

**PEEBLES - Wednesday 28th August 4pm – 6pm**  
Peebles Burgh Hall, Chambers Institution, High Street, Peebles

**GALASHIELS - Friday 30th August**  
11am – 1pm Church Square (old laundry room next to no.16)  
2pm – 4pm Gala Park (opposite Scott Street store)

**KELSO - Tuesday 3rd September, 3pm-5pm**  
Kelso Swimming Pool, Inch Road, Kelso, TD5 7JP

**ONLINE via Microsoft Teams - Thursday 5th September 2pm – 3pm**  
Please email [communications@sbha.org.uk](mailto:communications@sbha.org.uk) to register for the link

**GALASHIELS - Friday 6th September**  
11am – 1pm Balmoral Avenue (in block no. 77-87)  
2pm – 4pm Forest Road (in block no. 1-11)

We will also be holding smaller pop-up events in other towns and villages, including some of the more rural locations across the Borders in September. If you would like us to visit your area, so you can share your thoughts and ideas on shaping services at SBHA, please contact Louise McNeilage, Tenant & Community Engagement Facilitator. You can reach Louise on Freephone 0800 0193 222 or by email at [communications@sbha.org.uk](mailto:communications@sbha.org.uk).



*Join us for*  
Refreshments  
Fun Games & Prizes  
Meet the Team  
Raffle for 2 x £100 shopping vouchers,  
air fryers, electric throws  
and much more!





## Ageing Well - University research

Researchers at the University of Stirling are looking for people aged 45 plus to take part in a diary study over the next two years.

The purpose of this work is to understand how people may become excluded as they age, and how changes to their environment, for example adaptations to their home, may help to prevent this. This research will help service providers plan how they can

help people to age well within their homes and communities across Scotland, England and Wales.

To thank you for your time, once you've completed three diaries, the researchers will give you £25.

To find out more, please contact Prof. Vikki McCall,  
E-mail: [vikki.mcall@stir.ac.uk](mailto:vikki.mcall@stir.ac.uk)  
Tel: +44 (0) 1786 467698.



You can also scan the QR code above to visit the project website and find out more.

## #HereForYou - meet Jane!

Jane Blair is our Tenancy Support Officer, here to help you with a variety of housing-related needs. Whether you need help setting up home, understanding your tenancy agreement, managing your rent, or accessing local services, Jane is here to provide you with personalised support and guidance to manage in your home.

*"The support that Jane has given me recently has been great, I really can't express what a difference it has made to me. Thank you and keep doing what you do because it is appreciated."*

Tenant from St Boswells

You can contact Jane on 0800 0193 222, or by emailing [enquiries@sbha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sbha.org.uk)

## Radio Teleswitch Service

You may have heard that the technology that supports the Radio Teleswitch Service (RTS), also known as Dynamic Teleswitch Service (DTS), meters will end on 30th June 2025.

The RTS allows energy suppliers to switch tariff rates on electricity meters, enabling cheaper electricity rates at certain times. The RTS uses longwave radio signals, which are becoming obsolete. Ofgem, the energy regulator, expects energy suppliers to replace RTS meters before the service ends in June 2025.

If you're not sure whether you have an RTS meter, there are a few things you can check:

- there may be a separate switch box near your meter with a radio teleswitch label on it
- your home is heated using electricity or storage heaters
- there is no gas supply to your area. This includes households in rural areas and high-rise flats
- you get cheaper energy at different times of day. Your tariff might be: Economy 7, Economy 10 or Total Heat Total Control

Don't worry, if you have an RTS or DTS meter, you can upgrade to a smart meter. Contact your electricity supplier to find out when they can install your new meter. See this info leaflet for more - <https://www.sfha.co.uk/mediaLibrary/other/english/114940.pdf>





# Thank you for your feedback

Following a successful pilot, we are now offering surveys following repairs. This allows you to give direct feedback closer to the time of having a repair carried out in your home, which means we can quickly identify and take steps to address any issues.

Following on from your feedback, we are now trialling a new scheduling system,

which organises jobs in a dynamic way.

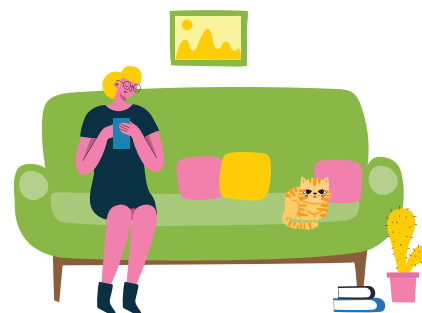
When your repair is due, the system will check to see which of our tradespeople is closest to be able to carry this out. In this way, we can get to you more quickly. In reducing travel time we're also reducing emissions in line with our More Sustainable Steps strategy.

**We would really like to encourage as many Tenants as possible to take just a few minutes to fill in these surveys - your feedback gives us the information we need to keep improving.**

## Your feedback matters!



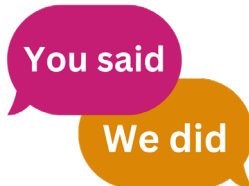
PERFORMANCE	2022-23	2023-24	How we're doing
Time taken to carry out an emergency repair	1.9 hrs	2 hrs	☹️
Time taken to carry out a non-emergency repair	10.7 days	11.2 days	☹️
Percentage collected of rent due	98.1%	99%	😊
Days to re-let an empty home	36	44	☹️
Calls resolved at first contact	87%	83%	☹️



COMPLAINTS OUTCOMES	2022-23	2023-24	How we're doing
Total complaints responded to	357	362	☹️
% of complaints responded to within SPSO timescales*	Stage 1: 87% Stage 2: 90%	87% 94%	😊 😊
Average days taken to respond	Stage 1: 4 Stage 2: 17	5 16	☹️ 😊
Not upheld	112	92	☹️
Partially upheld	66	63	😊
Upheld	127	156	☹️
Resolved	51	51	😊

## Website Redesign

Our recent Tenant survey told us that more than 80% of our Tenants are now online, but only 11% use our website.



Responding to your feedback, we are redesigning our website to create a more user-friendly and engaging online experience for you.

We will seek to improve navigation, making access to information and services easier and mobile-friendly.

Look out for more news on this soon!



# Sustainability - we need your views!

To help us plan how we will deliver sustainable growth and services, we would like to find out a bit about how you currently view the challenge of climate change. Please take a few minutes to fill in the brief survey below, and return to us at South Bridge House, Whinfield Road, Selkirk TD7 5DT. To be entered into our prize draw for a chance to win a £20 voucher, please remember to include your details in the box below.

You can also take part online by scanning this QR code -



1. How much, if at all, do you think climate change is currently affecting people in:

a. Other countries

- A great deal
- To some extent
- Not much
- Not at all
- Don't know

b. Scotland

- A great deal
- To some extent
- Not much
- Not at all
- Don't know

c. The Scottish Borders

- A great deal
- To some extent
- Not much
- Not at all
- Don't know

2. Like many governments and companies around the world, the Scottish Government is committed to achieving Net Zero. How much, if anything, do you know about this?

- A lot
- A fair amount
- A little
- Hardly anything but I've heard of it
- Never heard of it

Name.....

Address.....

Tel. no.....

email.....

3. To what extent do you support or oppose the idea of moving to a Net Zero target?

- Support strongly
- Somewhat support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- I don't know

4. How much do you think moving to Net Zero / reducing the carbon footprint of Scotland will impact on your life over the next decade?

- A great deal
- To some extent
- Not much
- Not at all
- Don't know

**Thank you for your input!**  
 Remember, to send feedback on this newsletter, share ideas for future articles or to find out more about any of the engagement opportunities highlighted in this newsletter, please contact [communications@sbha.org.uk](mailto:communications@sbha.org.uk), or Freephone 0800 0193 222.