

Lister Newsletter - February 2021

Rent review / Budget details

The Management Committee has considered a draft budget and rent review package for 2021-22 and now seeks your views on their proposals.

The Management Committee are considering the following rent review starting on 1 April 2021:

0 %

A rent point increase of 0 %

There will be no rise for inflation. There will a rise of 3 rent points for Main Site flats under the major repairs funding plan, which will mean a rise of approximately 1% for main site flats for this reason. There will also be a rise in the service charge for those Lister flats with services such as stair cleaning.

The Finance Sub Group considered the options for the budget and rent review, in advance of the Management Committee meeting. After careful consideration they decided that many of our tenants have had a very tough last 10-12 months with Covid-19 impacts and economic difficulties in many sectors and incomes.

The Management Committee has backed the 0% at this stage and will review the proposed increase at its February meeting and make a final decision.

The Management Committee will hold their virtual meet on Tuesday 23 February and the Committee would welcome any written comments on this draft budget & rent review.

The deadline for any written comments is Monday 22 February - 5pm

The rent rise being considered:

- A. No rise in the price per point. It will stay at 27.5 pence (per week).
- B. Main site flats will continue to have the extra increase of 3 rent points onto their flat's rent point total, as part of the agreed major repairs funding package. This means an increase of £0.82 pence per week (or £3.57pm).
- C. The increases will apply from 1 April 2021. All these elements are eligible for housing benefit & Universal Credit housing costs.
- D. Service charges - increases as outlined in individual letters to those with these charges, sent some weeks ago.

Rents and inflation

Inflation is rising slightly from a very low level.

The latest figures show the Retail Price Index (RPI) was 1.2% in December. Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 0.6%.

The Committee puts this proposal out to consultation with Lister tenants.

Any feedback, together with the January inflation figures due in mid-February will be considered at the February Committee meeting.

MAINTENANCE BUDGET FOR 2021-22

The main part of the maintenance plans is the Main Site Kitchen upgrade programme which is just about to go out to public tender. The work on site should start late Spring, subject to any Covid-19 restrictions.

The maintenance plan will also continue the following important work and this work is obligatory for all Main Site flats, for safety and legislative reasons:

- (a) Upgrading the consumer unit (fuse-box) with a new one and carrying out a whole-flat electrical check - last done approximately 10 years ago.
- (b) Installing a new smoke detector system (in those Main Site flats which have not had this work done) to meet the latest safety standards and as required by new Scottish Government legislation.

We will continue exploring energy conservation measures for properties. In addition we will continue with the important gas servicing contract; carry out painting of exterior woodwork (mostly the fencing on the Main Site back green); and the usual roof maintenance check.

There is one Main Site roof where the lead central gutter needs renewing and this will be done along with enhancements to the roof drainage.

WELFARE ADVICE

Lister has joined up with West Granton Housing Co-op to share a welfare rights advice service, provided by an expert who works for Port of Leith Housing Association.

If you wish help sorting out a benefit issue, whether housing benefit, JSA, Universal Credit and it is getting complicated, Lister can refer you to this specialist service and they will help you to fight for your rights and attempt to resolve your benefit issues.

Ask Fiona, our Housing Assistant for more information about being referred to this new, confidential service.

SCOTTISH CHILD PAYMENT

This is a new payment from the Scottish Government to those who look after a child under 6 years old

Visit mygov.scot/scottish-child-payment

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Most of the usual Christmas events were organised at Lister with cinema tickets for children totalling £210 for 21 children; the OAP Christmas vouchers were £580 for 58 people. The Committee/Staff meal out was not held due to Covid

DEBT ADVICE

Lister has also joined a shared service for Debt Advice, with some other housing assoc's & co-ops. There is an expert at CHAI - the long-established advice agency based in Gorgie/Dalry.

The service is confidential and Lister is not involved, but we can make referrals. If you are struggling to juggle multiple debts then ask to be referred. Speak to Fiona, our Housing Assistant, now.