

Lister Newsletter - July 2021

Good news for the future of your co-op

You will recall that the Management Committee had to organise an Options Appraisal due to the senior officer (Alistair Cant) retiring later this year.

The report by the consultant has confirmed what the Committee hoped - that Lister has a good viable future and that the tenants, Committee members and staff all wish the organisation to remain independent. The Committee decides to follow this sound advice and have moved to the next stage - planning the recruitment of a new senior officer. The Scottish Housing Regulator have noted Lister's decision and wished us well.

The job of Director is going to be renamed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to match most other housing associations and co-operatives.

The sound financial standing of Lister - with money in the bank, no mortgages outstanding, and prudent management from the Committee and the dedicated staff - have all helped us reach this position where our strength and stability has been independently confirmed.

Tenant Feedback Report

The Options Appraisal consultants produced a Tenant Feedback Report which featured comments from a range of tenants that were contacted by TPAS.

A big thank you to all those tenants who took the time to talk/send in comments. This helped the process of assessing the future of the co-op considerably.

There were a range of views - some mostly positive, others saying some things could be improved. All were welcome and the Committee studied the summary report carefully.

The feedback showed that Lister tenants do wish to know more and to be kept informed and take a keen interest in their co-op and their environment.

We do not have 'Communications Officers' or the like, and this helps keep costs low to have funds to invest in key programmes. However, the Committee are committed to keeping our tenants involved and informed.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM for Lister will now be held on Wednesday 22 September 2021 in the large Lauriston Hall - 22 Lauriston Street - the hall attached to the Jesuit church. This has plenty of space and an entrance and separate exit.

See more information on this inside.

KITCHENS KITCHENS KITCHENS

The kitchen specification has been enhanced - with a strainer basket sink option. Read about it inside --->



AGM and a SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING - WED 22 SEPTEMBER

Due to Covid concerns, the AGM normally held in late June will now take place at 7.30pm on WEDNESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2021.

To have a larger size venue to allow social distancing and plenty of space, Lister has hired the large Lauriston Hall at 28 Lauriston Street. This is the community hall of the adjacent Jesuit church and has been used for years for ceilidhs, weddings and other such events.

There will not be any social event or catering this year to reduce the risks and the venue has a separate entrance and exit. We hope to offer a wee 'thank-you' for those attending - more details in due course. There will be the facility to give a Proxy to someone else, if you cannot attend on the evening. This is a useful option as it gives your vote to someone else and also allows for your name to be counted in the attendance and quorum requirements.

There will also be a brief Special General Meeting held immediately after the AGM. This will be to consider an updating of the Lister Rules - our constitutional document. We are strongly encouraged to keep our Rules up to date and the new version would also give the Co-op better flexibility in the future - it allows us to have virtual meetings if those were the only alternative if another Covid-type pandemic or disaster were to afflict us.

All tenants are encouraged to attend or send a Proxy. More details to follow.

Traffic and Heriot's parents

There has been growing concern about the adverse impacts of the twice daily school-run of cars accessing Keir Street and Heriot Place - causing jams, noise, pollution and a risk to children and others from all the manoeuvrings.

Alistair has met with the Estates Manager for Heriot's and he has written on behalf of the Committee a strongly-worded request to the Principal requesting that they close their Heriot Place gate to such drop-offs and collections.

Their main entrance and pedestrian entrances are all on the main Lauriston Place frontage so these should be used. A number of other schools in Edinburgh including Gillespie's Primary and Bruntsfield Primary have had road closures to make safer access for those walking or cycling to school and Lister will press for this if this voluntary request does not get listened to.

We shall see what happens when the new term starts in mid-August.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS ITEMS

GAS SERVICING - Thank you to everyone for helping Lister maintain a very good record on the important gas servicing. The legal requirement to have this crucial work done hasn't changed during this Covid period, so thank you to everyone who has helped provide access for the engineers.

16 KEIR ST ROOF WORK - This went successfully after a delayed start. Thank you for being patient with any inconvenience. We now have a very high quality refurbished central lead gutter, new lead water-gates, drain pipes and overflows.

RENT STATEMENTS - our new housing software allows us to easily print a rent statement for any tenant so if you are not sure of your rent balance or recent past payments, just ask for one.

We can refer tenants for specialist Welfare Benefits advice and for Debt/ Money Advice - ask Fiona at Lister.

Main Site Kitchen programme has started at last!

The kitchen contractor has started on site on Monday 12 July - hurrah. Prior to that, tenants in the first batch of addresses had invites to the special Kitchen Exhibition at the Lister office, and a visit from the Magnet Surveyor.

The running order starts at 16-20 Heriot Place, then along Heriot Place, then Keir Street, starting at 2, then Lauriston Place starting at 44. This followed the route of the programme about 16+ years ago.

Two flats a week are being done at present and with almost 135 flats, this may then take just over a year. However it may speed up slightly but we do not want to go too fast.

WHEN CAN I FIND OUT ABOUT MY KITCHEN CHOICES AND OPTIONS?

The short answer is NOW - if you have access to the internet.

All the printed materials that are delivered to the current batch of tenants, is available on our Lister website at:
<https://lister.coop/for-tenants/main-site-kitchens-2021/>

The material includes the following:

- Kitchen selection form
- Additional sink sheet
- Flowchart
- List of FAQs

There are two important points for all Main Site tenants - as follows:

1) All properties are required by the Scottish Govt to be upgraded to the higher spec/safer smoke detector system AND have a whole-house electric check done. At Lister we are also replacing the fuse-board with the latest version as this is worth doing at the same time as the whole house check. The Committee has stated that if you do not allow access for this work then your address will not be added to the kitchen programme list.

2) The Kitchen Exhibition at the Lister office is only open by appointment to those in the current batch of addresses.

KITCHEN SELECTION FORM

1. FRONTALS (tick one box only)



Square copper handle & square copper knob

New sink option - with strainer basket

Since the original spec for the kitchen was decided, we have identified that for only a bit more money, we can order a Brand-name sink (Franke) with a deeper bowl area and a strainer-basket outlet.

This allow debris to be caught and by lifting the basket, the debris can be put in your bin rather than go down the drains.

If you push the strainer down then it becomes a plug to allow the sink to fill with water. Clever!

SMART METERS

You may be offered the option to upgrading to Smart meters by your energy supplier. Lister believes they offer several benefits, however we are not involved in this work at all so the choice is up to you.

BACK GREENS AND GARDENS UPDATE

Our gardener Sam has been working away steadily since June and already there are signs of a good number of improvements. There is more work planned in the pipeline and here is some information on the back greens and gardening topics:

- There is usually one spare brown bin in the Main Site back green for tenants to use . Please only put garden waste in this - no rocks or large amounts of soil. Please return it to beside the Gardener's compound if you take it away. The bins get collected every fortnight on a Thursday, often sharp in the morning.
- The Committee has decided that no chemical weedkillers are to be used to help protect the environment and as part of our green/eco-friendly policy. This may mean more weeds in the short term. The Committee is also concerned about the impact of domestic cats preying upon birds especially those with young in nests here.
- Help in the gardens. Occasional some children have been helping Sam and he can sometimes accommodate that but he is not there to supervise children and he and Lister take no responsibility for children. If adults wish to help by doing any weeding or similar, then please check with Sam first so that effort is co-ordinated. Thanks.
- We have been replacing some of the wooden upright posts of the New Site back green planters and we are planning to have a refresh of some of the plants there. We are looking for ideas for something to replace the tortoise and we are going to see if the Grassmarket Project woodwork workshop can assist perhaps.
- There have been complaints about dog owners allowing their dogs to leave dog poo in the landscaped areas around Lister, for example at the front of the Quartermile building by Lauriston Terrace. This poses a health hazard for garden users and for those who have to mow and care for these spaces. Pick up all dog poo.
- There have been a number of reports of rats in a few places - the Art College car park, some front basements in Keir Street. Lister has engaged a pest control firm to assist in this issue. Please do not leave food out or feed pigeons as this food can encourage rats. Thank you for your vigilance on this.

Fibre internet

Lister has been approached by City Fibre who are a firm that lay in fibre cabling direct to just by properties. This would allow broadband and telephone providers to then sign up people for such a service easily.

We are looking to allow them permission to pre-cable around Lister, such to meeting conservation requirements.

Other firms such as BT and/or Sky and/or Virgin may do the same in the future.

Edinburgh Council have tabled proposals to make the city centre a low emission zone (LEZ) and these are out for consultation. The zone would discourage the most polluting types of vehicles from entering the city centre.

The consultation ends on 20 Sept 2021. See this webpage for more details:
<https://planningedinburgh.com/2021/07/09/proposed-low-emission-zone-consultation/>

We are sorry to hear of the death of Angela McCartan, of Lauriston Place. She lived to a very good age and her family said she really loved the community at Lister.