

Connect

with Eildon Housing *Autumn 2024*



Supporting you
this Winter



Caring, Committed, Connected, Creative



YOUR OPINION



YOUR MONEY



YOUR HOME



YOUR COMMUNITY

www.eildon.org.uk

Welcome

Nile Istephan, Eildon CEO



Performance Report 2023/24

Hello and welcome to our Autumn edition of the Connect. You will by now have received a copy of our Performance Report for 2023/24 either by email or post.

The Performance Report is produced every year as a requirement of the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) for all social landlords. The SHR sets out the questions to be asked, which helps tenants understand where their landlord sits in direct comparison with others in Scotland. Each housing association asks their tenants the same questions, sometimes in a different way, so an element of caution is needed when comparing the results.

We are also required to submit an Annual Assurance Statement. This statement assures SHR that Eildon complies with the standards as set out in the [SHR Regulatory Standards](#). This year we submitted our sixth [Annual Assurance Statement](#) and can report we are compliant. If you would like to find out more, you can visit the SHR website www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk to find out how we are regulated, and if you have any questions or feedback, please email Housing@eildon.org.uk.

In this issue...

- Help shape our services
- Building a sustainable future
- Winter Support
- Home Improvements
- 20 years of Care & Repair
- Estate Walkabouts
- Take control of your bills



Jayne Pashley

Introducing new board member Jayne Pashley

I joined Eildon's Board in September 2024. I have over 25 years of human resources and management experience, including HR Director for a large Scottish housing association. I am a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD and hold a LLM in Employment Law in addition to other business and HR qualifications. I now work with a diverse range of organisations as an independent HR consultant. My specialisms are organisation development, conflict management, training and coaching.

I live in the Borders, and I am delighted to have this opportunity to support Eildon and the interests of people in our community. In my free time, I am mostly outdoors whether horse-riding, walking, or taming my garden! I also enjoy theatre and music.

Membership for the Board for 2024/25 was confirmed as:

Ron Beardsley, Cathie Fancy (Chair), Brian Frater (Vice Chair and Chair of Remuneration Committee), Amanda Harvie, Chris Highton, Ross Kilshaw, Catherine Louch, Allan Lundmark (Chair of EEL), Hannah MacLeod, Eibhlin McHugh, Jayne Pashley, Ewen Swinton (Chair of ARCom).

Our AGM 2024

We held our 51st AGM on Wednesday 4 September as well as a Special General Meeting required to approve an amendment to our borrowing powers. Reflecting on a very positive year, we also elected our Board for the coming year. We welcomed Jayne Pashley as a new member and said goodbye to Dr Alan Mordue after five years' service on the Board.



Our 5 Year Strategy Consultation

We're developing our 5-Year Strategy for Eildon, and we'd like your help.

Our 5-Year Strategy is the most important planning tool for the future of Eildon and you, as our customers, are uniquely placed to give your views on what we do.

Our current 5-Year Strategy is based around four key themes.

Over the next few months, our Customer Voice Group are going to be discussing plans for the 5-Year Strategy and helping to inform the decisions we make. We will also be contacting members of the Customer Opinion Group for their views and asking you to complete a short questionnaire. The questionnaire is available here and on our website (with paper copies available on request).



The revised 5-Year Strategy will be presented, for its approval at our Board in February 2025 and if approved, will be in place for **1 April 2025**.



Help shape our services

As you know, we're always keen to hear your views and to offer you opportunities to help shape our services. There are a range of ways to do that, and they are all covered in our Customer Voice Strategy. bit.ly/CustomerVoiceStrategy

As part of this work, we've recently consulted with customers on our Void Management Policy, and with both customers and applicants on our Allocations Policy.



We received good feedback from both, with the majority of respondents on the Void Management Policy agreeing that the update was clear but that **a customer leaflet would be useful to summarise what our Lettable Standard is. We're now preparing that leaflet for sharing.**

We were delighted to receive 146 responses on the draft of our Allocations Policy covering the six main areas of change. We are now preparing a consultation report which will inform the final stage of policy development, before it is considered by our Board in December. **We will issue more information on the changes to our Allocations Policy in the coming months.**

We have a few big consultations on the way too, including our Customer Service Standards and our Customer Voice Strategy itself. If you would like to get involved in shaping these, please get in touch.

Net Zero Win

Building a sustainable future



Even more good news - we were over the moon to be named **Net Zero Business of the Year at the Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce Awards 2024!** This award is thanks to the hard work and dedication of our entire team, especially our Sustainability Working Group.

Over the past year, we've made great progress with our sustainability journey, including **retrofitting 31 homes with heat pumps, solar panels, and battery storage – saving 44 tonnes of CO2e annually while providing affordable warmth to our customers. We've also installed solar**

Scan the QR code to take part in our sustainability survey and you could win one of three £50 High Street Vouchers!



panels and battery storage at our head office, diverted 33 tonnes of trade waste from landfill, and even upcycled IT equipment, saving 3.2 tonnes of CO2e.

We will continue working with our customers and partners to help build a sustainable future together.

Are you missing out this Winter?

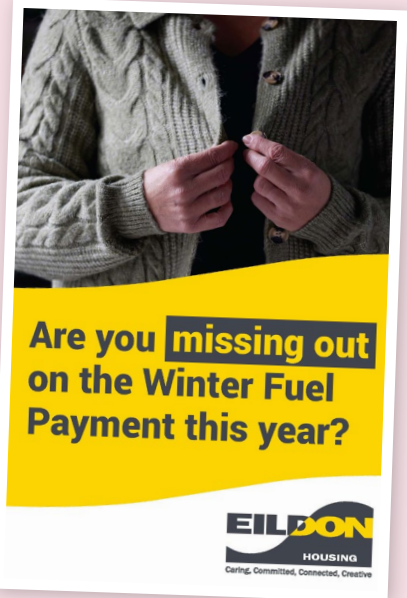
As part of Challenge Poverty week in October, our Tenancy Sustainment Officers, Caroline and Carol, were out and about visiting tenants in our supported and extra care developments, giving advice to people who may be missing out on their pension credit and winter fuel payments.

You may also be due £1,000s a year in pension credit.

If you're retired and have income less than:

- £218 a week as an individual, or
- £332 a week as a couple

You could be entitled to Pension Credit.



For more information please get in touch with our Tenancy Sustainment Team on:



03000 200 217



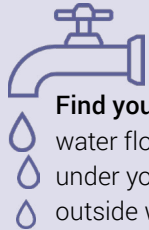
housing@eildon.org.uk

Preparing your home for Winter

As we approach winter, the changing weather can cause damage to your home. Easy steps you can do to help you prepare:-

If you have gas central heating - bleed your radiators. If you haven't used your radiators in a while, you may find they are cold at the top and hot at the bottom. To get the most out of your heating (and money), bleed your radiators regularly. Before starting, have an old cloth and a bleed key ready and make sure the heating is off.

We can supply a bleed key if you need one. (Get in touch using the contact information on the back page). There should be a valve on the radiator, usually at the top, and you need to turn this until you hear a hissing sound. Use the cloth to catch any liquid that comes out of the radiator. As soon as the hissing stops and only water comes out, turn the valve key again to tighten.



Burst Pipes

Find your stopcock. It's important to know where your stopcock is so you can stop water flowing into your home in the event of a burst pipe. Your stopcock is usually under your kitchen sink, but it may also be near the boiler, under the stairs, or on an outside wall. You should be able to turn it to shut the water supply on or off. If you are unsure, please contact us.

Keep your heating on a timer - If you're planning to be away and the weather temperature is set to fall, set your heating to come on with a timer setting.

This could prevent the water in your pipes freezing if it gets really cold, which could lead to burst pipes or flooding.

How to deal with a frozen water pipe

- Turn your water supply off at your stopcock
- Turn all your cold taps on to drain the system and leave them on
- Do not open hot taps, as you may damage the hot water cylinder

To deal with hot water:

- Turn off the central heating boiler and immersion heater, if you have one
- Then open the hot water taps, collecting the water in the bath for washing and flushing the toilet



Get in touch if you need any help.



Your Questions

Heating Systems

Our Customer Experience Team are on hand to help answer your questions when you contact us. Some of the questions we get asked about the most are about heating systems.

A small proportion of tenants have an air source heat pump and sometimes they are unsure about how they operate.

For more information, here is some handy information about air source heat pumps.

<https://bit.ly/ASHeatPumps>

CHANGEWORKS.


Self Help



For other heating systems, we have created a series of short 'how to' videos you can find on our YouTube channel:

<https://bit.ly/YouTubeSelfHelp>

- [basic controls on your boiler](#)
- [how to set basic controls of electric storage heaters](#)
- [how to set your electronic heating programmer](#)
- [how to set your mechanical boiler system](#)
- [thermostat and heating](#)
- [how to turn off your water at the mains valve](#)

We hope this information is useful. 

'My Eildon' – customer portal
Easier, quicker, available 24/7
<https://bit.ly/MyEildon>



Avoid any costs

Access to your home for Electrical Safety Inspections

We are carrying out the required five yearly Electrical Safety Inspections to ensure we are compliant with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). Element 45 - an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) is available for each property – proving your home is safe and meets the current electrical standards.

This is essential work and it is mandatory that an electrical inspection takes place. If we are unable to arrange appointments with you to gain access to your home, we will have no option but to force entry. If this happens you may be liable to pay the costs of replacement locks and any damage to the door. To avoid this and possible costs to you, we strongly urge you to arrange a suitable appointment when requested.



CHANGEWORKS.

Borders Housing Network commissioned advice sheets and videos from Changeworks to help with heating and energy issues. These could be useful to you ahead of the colder weather. Head over to our website to find out more on smart meters, energy tips, solar panels and how to read your meter.



[https:// bit.ly/ChangeWorks](https://bit.ly/ChangeWorks)



Modernisation Programme Update

Our modernisation programme is delivering more home improvements than ever before through our in-house multi-trade HIT team and external contractors. Works are carried out across the Borders and as a tenant, you will be notified when there are any plans in your area.

Here is an indication of some of the projects planned and/or underway, along with photographs of some great results:

Window/door replacements: Quarry Green, Bowden (planned November), Stebbings Rise, Eyemouth (on site), St Andrew's Close, West Linton (on site)

Kitchens: Cherry Park, Tweedbank (completed), and Woodside Gardens, Kelso (on site)

Bathrooms: Larchbank Street, Galashiels (on site)



Planning a trip away?

If you are planning on going away throughout the year, when you return please remember to run your hot and cold taps for a couple of minutes to reduce the risk of bacteria built up.

This is also important for any showers you have in your home.

Care & Repair Service 20 years old and still going strong



Working in partnership with Scottish Borders Council, the Borders Care & Repair service has made a terrific contribution across our region for 20 years. The adaptation and handyperson service has enabled Borders' residents to continue to live independently in their own homes and you don't need to be an Eildon tenant to subscribe to this service. **Since it started in 2004, £13.8 million has been spent on adaptations to local homes.**

Their aim is to make customers' homes:

- more comfortable
- safer and more secure
- better suited to their needs

The feedback from people who have benefited from the service has made it all worthwhile.

Find out more on our website:

<https://bit.ly/3B3Dxgl>

I mean it when I say I am deeply grateful. I never knew what a most caring service this is.



Your staff are a credit to the company. I would recommend them for initiative and civility. Thank you.



Funding Success



Three more years for OPAL (Older People Active Lives) thanks to the National Lottery 'Improving Lives' Fund. We're extremely grateful and pleased our application to the National Lottery's 'Improving Lives' fund has been successful. We were awarded just over £147,000 which will allow us to continue the OPAL project for the next three years, building on all the hard work of our teams at our supported and extra care housing developments.

Come along and take part...

We know that there are large numbers of people facing social isolation and loneliness across our communities, and we understand the negative impact this can have on health and wellbeing. OPAL aims to change all that with fantastic activity sessions across our developments in Gala, Hawick, Kelso and Peebles every two weeks.



Designed for those 60+, we would encourage anyone who fancies it to come along and see what it's like. They not only benefit our customers, but also the wider community, so please invite your friends!

Have fun helping out at groups...

We're also always on the lookout for people to volunteer at the sessions. This is a really rewarding experience which can help you meet new people, make new friends, or even build new skills for your CV.

If you're interested in taking part or helping out, please email housing@eildon.org.uk or call 03000 200 217.



Estate Walkabouts - Findings

Our Housing and Maintenance Officers inspected 170 developments during their estate walkabouts over the summer, so thank you if you took the time to come along to meet with them.



The main issue raised was the quality of 'grounds maintenance'.

You said that work is not always being carried out in accordance with the agreed service schedule. Our Maintenance Officers have listened to this feedback and are liaising with the relevant contractors to rectify this.

Repairs to fencing and walls have been arranged and any **bushes or hedges needing trimmed** will be pruned ahead of the winter.

Some tenants' **gardens were overgrown, or full of debris**. Housing Officers are speaking directly to the tenants concerned. Appropriate **bin storage** was also discussed.

We are discussing two developments with SBC with a view to finding better bin store solutions for them.

A number of improvements were also identified during the walkabouts which we will cost and discuss further with the tenants concerned.

Whenever we are out and about, we will keep an eye on grounds maintenance, cleaning services and check out the condition of communal areas.

If you see any issues which need our attention, please let us know via our online form: <https://bit.ly/EHAContact> or contact us directly.

Take control of Energy Bills with a Smart Meter



A smart meter can help you take control of your energy use. Smart meters come with a display that shows at a glance how much gas and electricity you're using and how much you're spending. That means you can plan ahead; knowing how much your energy bill will be can help you make small changes around the home to use less energy, which could save you money. Some homes can't get a smart meter yet, but your energy supplier can tell you if you can have one and how soon it can be installed.



Storage Heaters and Smart Meters

If you have storage heaters in your home and haven't had your meter upgraded to a smart meter, it's important that you contact your energy supplier to book an appointment to have this done. Suppliers are responsible for replacing meters, including those for storage heating, which can have a piece of equipment included with the meters called a teleswitch.

Energy suppliers are working to replace meters and teleswitches with smart meters ahead of a June 2025 deadline.

You can read more about the changes here:

<https://bit.ly/HomeEnergyRTS>

Ask your energy supplier for a smart meter or search "get a smart meter".

Christmas Opening Hours

We'd like to wish all of our tenants a peaceful time over Christmas and the New Year.

We'll be closed for the festive period from 2pm on Tuesday 24 December 2024, and will reopen at 8:45am on Friday 3 January 2025.


If you have an emergency you can contact us on:
03000 200 217.


How to Contact Us

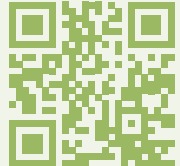
We welcome your feedback – there are many ways to let us know what you think.

-  The Weaving Shed, Etrick Mill,
Dunsdale Road, Selkirk TD7 5EB
-  Customer Service: 03000 200 217
-  housing@eildon.org.uk

 www.eildon.org.uk

 EildonHousing

 @eildonhousing



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
We invest in people Gold

 Printed on recycled paper

Co-operative & Community Benefit Societies Act 1757R(S).
A Scottish Charity SC015026.
Registered with Scottish Housing Regulator HEP107.



Caring, Committed, Connected, Creative