

ancho NEWS

Spring 2021

SEAN CONNOR JOINS TEAM

There have been some changes to the staffing team at Ancho recently. Following 16 years at Ancho, Keith Henderson, Head of Service has left for pastures new. He will be missed by us all.

We have appointed Sean Connor as the new Director of Customer Services to complete a reshaped Executive Team. Sean joins us from the Wheatley Group, and will lead an ambitious team with responsibility for delivering modern, customer focussed services across Scotland.

Sean Connor said:

“I am both excited and eager to be joining the Cairn Housing Group. The opportunity to provide leadership and build upon the strong foundations already laid, will be a challenge that I will relish. I look forward to bringing energy, determination and a commitment to innovative ideas and a 21st century service for our customers”.

Jason MacGillp, Cairn Housing Group Chief Executive, said:

“We are delighted to be welcoming Sean to the team. He brings a wide range of skills and experience in housing services, community regeneration and third sector organisations. Sean will have a leadership role across Cairn and Ancho, developing a new, post-Covid-19, service model and will drive forward our customer service offer in local communities across Scotland. This appointment now completes a recent Executive Team restructure.”

Jacquie Gardner was appointed as Area Housing Manager and she joins Paul Andrews, Asset Manager, to head up the management team at Ancho.



ARE YOU RECEIVING OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTERS?

Last year we asked for your ideas and feedback on our newsletters and how we keep you up to date with news at Ancho. You gave us some great ideas and we introduced new email bulletins. We've now sent three email newsletters and feedback has been incredibly positive, with 98% saying they like the content and design of the new format.

In each email we ask tenants a few quick questions about different topics for the chance to win £50. We've been really pleased with the response rates, which have been much higher than the postal surveys we used to carry out. In the following email newsletter we report back the results and provide information on what we plan to do with the results. You can go onto the tenant involvement page of our website to read these reports.

If you haven't received an email then please get in touch through webchat, Facebook messenger, give us a call, or email mail@ancho.co.uk to give us your email address and we'll put you on the mailing list for next time.



COME AND JOIN OUR BOARD

Ancho's Board members have chosen to volunteer because they want the lives of Ancho's tenants to be the best they can be. We're searching for like-minded tenants to join them in shaping the future of the organisation.

Board members come from all walks of life. Diversity is so important; it allows us to utilise the countless skills and experiences that different people acquire over time. And the experience of an Ancho tenant is incredibly valuable to us. After all, no one knows our services better than you.

As part of our governing body, you'll make strategic business decisions about the management of Ancho, including key policy and budget decisions.

If you'd like to become a member of our Board,

please get in touch. Training, support and mentoring is available to all Board members.

Meet the Board

Our Board members will be holding a virtual session in early May. This will give you the opportunity to meet the Board and find out what they do. It will also give them the opportunity to speak to you and find out what it's like to be an Ancho tenant. If you'd like to attend, please give Carolyn Owens, Governance Services Manager, a call or email carolyn.owens@cairnha.com

Please note, this session is open to all Ancho tenants and not just to those who are interested in becoming a Board member.

MY ANCHO

We have just launched My Ancho, which has been specially designed for making life a little easier for our tenants. Use your phone, tablet or computer to log into your own tenant portal. Even if you haven't used the internet much before, you'll find it easy to access the services you need.

We've put together a range of services on My Ancho we think you'll find useful - and we're adding new features all the time.

When you log in to your account you can:

- View your tenancy agreement and read important information before signing up for your new home
- Report routine and urgent repairs (emergency repairs should always be reported by phone)
- View your account balance and pay your rent
- View old previous transactions
- Make a complaint
- Report antisocial behaviour
- Update your contact details
- Inform us about changes to your tenancy
- Give feedback about our services

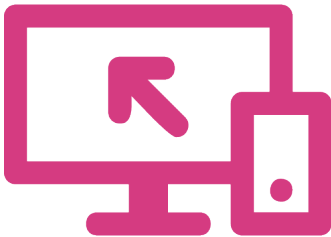
Ready to sign up?

Registering with My Ancho is easy and will only take you a couple of minutes.

When you sign up, you'll be asked for the following information:

- Your name
- Your date of birth
- Your address
- Your email address
- Your tenancy reference number (this is the 18-digit character reference you can find on your rent statements and starts with the first few letters of your address)

Don't worry if you don't have all this information to hand. You can start the registration process online and then our contact centre team will help you complete it. Or, you can contact us, and we'll send a link to activate your account.



HOW TO SAVE MONEY ON EBAY

eBay is a massive marketplace with millions of goods. Try our tips to find yourself a bargain.

1. Wrongly spelled products attract fewer bids because many people miss them. For example, instead of searching for 'nutribullet', try searching for 'nutrabullet'
2. Sellers often start auctions at 99p, hoping a bidding war will start but many items go unspotted and stay at this super-low price. www.lastminute-auction.com/uk hunts for eBay auctions due to finish within an hour, but still cost £1 or less.
3. If you want something very specific or hard to track down, you can 'save' the search so eBay sends you an email each time a seller lists your desired item.
4. Spotted something you want to buy? The last thing you should do is bid on it. Bid early and competing buyers will bid back, forcing the price upwards. Instead, wait until the last 15 seconds, leaving no time for others to outbid you.
5. Ask the seller if you they will accept a lower price. Haggling works best on buy-it-now listings, or auctions with a high start price and no bids.
6. Bid a few extra pence to boost your bid's chances. Most people bid in round numbers so it can pay to increase it slightly For example, if you are willing to pay £40 for an item then put in your bid £40.27. If someone else bids £40, then you've won the item.
7. Never send cheques or cash. Pay by card or Paypal – it means you're covered by eBay's Money Back Guarantee scheme if something goes wrong.
8. Sellers may suggest you do a deal outside eBay for a cheaper price so they can avoid paying seller's fees. But buy this way and you'll have less protection if things go pear-shaped.
9. Missed out on a desired item by pennies? Don't write it off. Sometimes buyers change their minds and don't complete the sale so send the seller a friendly message saying you're interested if the sale falls through.
10. Spotted a pricey jacket, sofa or scooter and want to know if you can find similar on eBay for a cheaper price? Download and open the eBay app, tap the search bar followed by the camera symbol, and take a photo of the item you want – the app will search eBay for matching objects and lookalikes for sale.

Tips taken from moneysavingexpert.com



JOB START PAYMENT

Job Start Payment is a one-off payment of £250 (or £400 if you're the main carer of any children) to help young people with the costs of starting a new job.

You can apply for this benefit if you are aged between 16-24, have been out of paid work for six months or more when you were offered the job and are on certain benefits.

To check your eligibility and to apply, go to mygov.scot/job-start-payment

SELF-ISOLATION GRANT

If you're a low income worker and Test and Protect tell you to self-isolate you may be able to get a £500 Self-Isolation Support Grant.

To be eligible for the grant, all four things must apply:

1. You must be told by Test and Protect to self-isolate because you have tested positive for coronavirus, have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, are the parent or carer of a child under 16 who has to self-isolate, are caring for someone over 16 who has been told to self-isolate
2. You must be employed or self-employed
3. You will lose income because you cannot work from home
4. You must be on a low income or on certain benefits

To apply go to mygov.scot/self-isolation-grant

SCOTTISH CHILD PAYMENT

Scottish Child Payment is a benefit that helps towards the costs of supporting your family. It's a weekly payment of £10 that you can get for every child you look after who's under 6 years of age. You'll get the payment every 4 weeks if your application is successful.

It's up to you what you choose to spend the money on. You could use Scottish Child Payment for things like:

- travel costs
- nappies and other essentials
- childcare
- family days out

To apply, you need to be on certain benefits and be the main carer for a child under the age of six. You can apply at mygov.scot/scottish-child-payment



ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Where would we be without electricity? We rely on it for everything from cooking and bathing to keeping warm and keeping entertained. But electricity is responsible for 20,000 fires in UK homes every year, so it's important you take steps to protect yourself and your loved ones from electrical dangers. Here's how.

What are the most common dangers?

The five appliances that cause the most electrical fires in UK homes are:



The biggest cause of fires in the home is cooking appliances, When using them be sure to follow these rules.

- Do not:
- let leads from other appliances like kettles and toasters trail across your cooker
 - use the area on top of your microwave for extra storage
 - dry towels on or near your cooker
 - hang items above your cooker, such as utensils
 - put metal, including foil, into your microwave
 - leave cooking unattended
 - let fat and grease build up on or in your cooker, especially in the grill pan where it can easily catch fire

Make sure you turn your cooker off when you have finished.

What else can I do to prevent a fire?

- Keep portable or storage heaters away from flammable materials like paper, curtains and furniture. Never use one to dry your clothes and always follow manufacturers instructions.
- Turn off any electrical appliances that you are not using, particularly at night, when a fire can quickly spread unnoticed and cause more danger and damage.
- Before plugging your appliances in, check flexible cables for damage, wear and tear, and that the plug is fastened securely to the cable. Don't use the appliance unless it and the cable are in good condition.
- Only use equipment that has the British kite and CE marking:



- Never leave charging laptops, phones or tablets unattended or on top of combustible materials such as beds and sofas. Always use the correct certified charger for your device.
- Always register your appliances to receive information on product recalls.
- Get in touch with your local fire service - they will be happy to carry out a free home fire safety visit

What about electrical adaptors?

Only use 13 amp 4-way multi bar adaptors (extension leads) with surge protection rather than a block adaptor as this will put less strain on the wall socket.

Some block adaptors don't have a fuse, which increases the risk of overloading and fire.

Only use one 4-way multi bar adaptor per socket and **NEVER PLUG ONE EXTENSION LEAD INTO ANOTHER.**

DO NOT overload electrical adaptors by plugging too many appliances into one socket, especially those with a high electrical current rating such as kettles, irons, heaters and hair dryers.



How do I know how much power my appliances use?

Just because your extension lead can squeeze in four plugs doesn't mean it's safe to do so.

Surprisingly, some of the smallest appliances in our homes actually use the most amounts of power.

As a guide, you should only load one plug socket with a maximum of 3,000 watts.

If you're not sure about how much power your electrical appliances use, then you can use a handy online calculator to find out:

www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/safety-around-the-home/overloadingsockets/

You can find out more information in our Electrical Safety leaflet, which is available on our website.

DOES YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP NEED FUNDING?

Our partners at Cairn Housing Association have topped up the Community Fund and applications for projects in our communities are welcomed.

Over the last year Cairn saw a rise in grassroots projects springing up in communities that were formed to support people who were isolated or vulnerable because of the impact of the coronavirus lockdown. The Community Fund

was able to support 16 projects since the first lockdown, including foodbanks and meal services, which has helped countless people across Scotland. Grants are available for up to £1000 for community groups or charities, who seek funding to develop events or services in our communities. For more information please visit www.cairnha.com/your-community or give us a call for an informal chat about your project.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT AND RENT

Is your rent paid through Universal Credit? If so, then you need to tell the DWP of any change to your rent on 1 April (or as soon as you can after this date). Cairn cannot do this for you, only you can.

You should receive a note in your 'to-do' tab to complete. You can also do it by going to: Home / Report a change / Where you live and what it costs.

You must list your rent and service charges separately. Put £0.00 if you don't pay a service charge.

If you need help doing this or need confirmation of your housing costs, please get in touch.



CLAIM TAX RELIEF WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

Did you know that you can claim tax relief for costs if you work from home on a regular basis? This includes if you have to work from home because of coronavirus. You can't claim tax relief if you choose to work from home.

Additional costs include things like heating, contents insurance, business calls or broadband.

They do not include costs that would stay the same whether you worked elsewhere such as your rent or council tax.

To apply, go to gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home

CONTACTING ANCHO: SURVEY RESULTS

In our last email newsletter, sent in February, we asked you what you thought about the service you receive when you get in touch with the Ancho team.

The survey received 33 responses. Thank you to everyone who took the time to fill it in. Well done to Neil Turner from Irvine who is the winner of our £50 voucher.

When you phone Ancho, what qualities are most important to you?

The top three responses for tenants were:

- the friendliness and professionalism of staff,
- that our staff can give you helpful and accurate information
- that our staff fully understands why you have called

How satisfied are you with how quickly we answer your calls?

Unsatisfied 23%
Satisfied 77%

What other feedback do you have?

| |
|---|
| Happy |
| Doing great |
| No feedback other than wanting to move of this building sooner rather than later |
| The past few times I've phoned it's been a lady called Lynn. Each time she's been very friendly and always helpful with the queries that I've been calling about |
| For Ancho employees to realise we are all under pressure and not to be so judgemental regarding rent payments before listing or realising the way we have always paid |
| Since Ancho have merged it is a better service |
| I sometimes find it hard to catch the name of the person I am speaking to as they speak so quickly. |
| The colleagues I speak to on the phone always are very friendly and always sort out any issues |
| Sometimes unclear as to whether responder has the right information |
| Still repairs needing done! |
| Always helpful and kind |
| Never any issues. Always there when needed. Brilliant housing association |

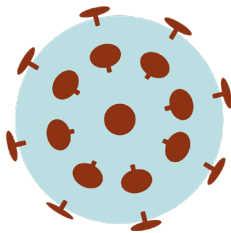
It was great to get some positive feedback about our team. Our Board are looking at your feedback when they set new targets for how quickly we answer calls or digital enquiries. We'll have more to update you on in the next email bulletin.



COVID-19 SERVICE LEVEL ROUTE MAP

With restrictions starting to be eased across Scotland again, some of our services will start to change. For example, we can start to carry out routine repairs in your home again.

We have a service level route map on our website that tells you exactly what you can expect from us depending on what level (or tier) your local authority is in. If you don't have access to the internet then please give us a call and we'll be happy to update you over the phone. or send out a copy to your home address.



WANT TO STOP SCAM CALLS?

Following an increase in the number of phone scams being reported since the start of the pandemic, Trading Standards Scotland are launching the roll out of free call blocking devices to vulnerable individuals who are most at risk from scammers and rogue traders.

They only have a limited number of devices available and priority will be given to those most at risk of being scammed including those with dementia, autism, mobility problems, or serious physical and mental health issues.

To apply, go to tsscot.co.uk/call-blockers



SERVICE PLUS WINNERS

Our Service Plus scheme is a reward scheme for tenants.

To be eligible for Service Plus, you must, at the end of each quarter, have owed now debt to Ancho and have had no warnings during the previous six months. The Service Plus winners for the last quarter are:

Mrs Hill, Irvine

£150

Miss Stirling, Dreghorn

£75

Miss Wilson, Irvine

£50

Miss Cooper, Irvine
Mr Dougherty, Irvine
Mr Brawley, Irvine

£25

DELAY TO PLANNED MAINTENANCE

Our current planned maintenance programme has been significantly affected by the Covid-19 restrictions that are still in place. This means that we've had to postpone projects such as kitchen replacements, door renewals and electrical rewires.

Outdoors work such as roofing or render/roughcast replacements have been able to continue through some of this period, however due to a reduced workforce and restricted access to building materials, this work is taking longer to carry out than planned.

It is likely, unless the Scottish Government changes its plans for their easing of restrictions, that we can look to reintroduce our full programme of planned maintenance from 26th April.

If work was due to be carried out to your home last year or if you're on the programme for this year, we will contact you before work is carried out and give you a more up to date timescale for when the work can start.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.



FOOD BANKS IN NORTH AYRSHIRE

If you've been struggling to put food on the table during the pandemic, there are a couple of agencies who will be able to help.

North Ayrshire Foodbank

Church of the Nazarene
150a Glasgow Street
Ardrossan

10am - 2pm

South Ardrossan Larder

This is a membership service and has a weekly fee of £4.
This entitles you to a weekly shop of healthy, nutritious food between £16 - £20. You need to fill in an application form and bring proof of address.

Church of the Nazarene
150a Glasgow Street
Ardrossan

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 10am - 2pm
Friday, 4pm - 6pm
Saturday - 10am - 2pm



Our mission is to create
neighbourhoods where
people want to live

Our head office:
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Our phone number:
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Our email:
mail@ancho.co.uk

Part of the

cairn
HOUSING GROUP

This newsletter is available on CD, in braille, in large print and in community languages.

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