



RODGERS' WRATH FOR 'PRIDELESS' DEFENCE



GERRARD CALLS FOR HEROES FOR RUSSIA

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Evening Times

68p

NOBODY KNOWS GLASGOW BETTER

Friday August 24, 2018

INSIDE

G1 staff 'wrongly dismissed'

A COURT has ruled in favour of bar workers wrongfully dismissed in a 'David and Goliath' battle.

Five workers from the bar won their tribunal claim at court earlier this week and bosses were found to have breached the contracts of three and unfairly dismissed another two.

Unite said the case should give confidence to hospitality workers across the country.

Full story: Page 5

Orange walk rerouted

AN Orange march will be rerouted after it was revealed riot police would be sent out if it wasn't.

The Orange Order said they were 'extremely concerned' and said it was discrimination in its purest form.

Full story: Page 13



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Seven-day TV guide

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EXCLUSIVE:

'Our two-year housing hell'



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Bungling bosses slammed for 'serious failures'

HOSPITAL STAFF 'BULLIED' OVER PARKING TICKETS

BY HELEN MCARDLE

HOSPITAL staff are being 'bullied' by debt collectors chasing unpaid parking tickets.

A union has raised concerns about warning letters being sent out to workers.

Full story: Page 9

Misery for workers as debt collectors chase up fines

Prisoner jailed over boiling water attack

A PRISONER has been jailed for another 18 months after throwing boiling water from a kettle over another inmate.

Samuel Boland, 49, scalded Francis Miller 23, as he ate lunch in Low Moss prison.

Miller immediately jumped up and confronted his attacker, before being taken to Glasgow Royal Infirmary where he was kept in for five days.

He suffered burns on the right side of his face, shoulder and chest and has been left with discoloured skin.

Boland, from Edinburgh, pleaded guilty at Glasgow Sheriff Court to assaulting Miller on July 19, last year, at the Bishopbriggs jail, to his severe injury and permanent disfigurement.

Sheriff Daniel Scullion jailed Boland for 18 months, reduced from 27 months.

Baby sensory company is given the green light

A COMPANY which provides educational programmes for babies and toddlers in Cumbernauld has finally been given permission to establish a permanent base in the town.

WOW World, which runs around a dozen Baby Sensory and Toddler Sense classes in the area every week, was previously refused permission to turn former offices in Wardpark Industrial Estate into a combined leisure and education facility, on the grounds that this would clash with the area's designation as a light industry zone.

Several other family-friendly businesses already operate in Wardpark.

However the decision was referred to North Lanarkshire Council's local review body, which voted unanimously in favour.

City housing group's

Years of complaints by families are backed by watchdog after serious concerns raised after review

EXCLUSIVE

BY CATRIONA STEWART

A HOUSING watchdog has exposed serious financial and management failures at an under-fire housing association behind the botched £8.5million refurbishment of hundreds of South Side homes.

The refurbishment scheme of 608 properties that should have taken 12 weeks – but is still ongoing 31 months later.

The Scottish Housing Regulator has now parachuted in a new manager and four other senior managers to rescue failing Thistle Housing Association.

For the past two years, the Evening Times has reported residents' serious concerns with the Toryglen organisation after a catalogue of failures.

Thistle bosses even called the police to report residents who complained about mismanagement of the project and their funds.

But now their concerns have been found to be justified as the regulator moved to safeguard the interests of tenants.

An independent review identified failures to meet regulatory standards of governance and financial management.

Ian Paterson was one of a group who lobbied First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and council leader Susan Aitken for support.

He said: "Two years ago residents smelt a rat in Thistle. We asked questions and, in turn, we were constantly lied to.

"It was all too obvious that they couldn't manage their Major Works Programme, which has yet to complete after 31 months.

"The current situation regarding the Regulator moving into Thistle only emphasises our fears and vindicates the actions of Toryglen residents.

"It is, it has to be said, also rather sad as the Association belongs to Toryglen residents and not to Thistle's senior management."

The Evening Times has spoken to countless residents and contractors affected by the programme of works.

Serious concerns were repeatedly raised about the mismanaged scheme.

Thistle, which employs 22 people, owns and manages 947 homes on the South Side and factors a further 786 for owners.

The regulator's report reads: "During 2017/18, we engaged with

Thistle around serious delays and difficulties in managing a substantial contract, its governance capacity, risk management and its communications with service users and stakeholders.

"We also engaged around weaknesses in Thistle's approach to complaints handling."

The project, paid for by Glasgow City Council and Scottish Government funds to the tune of £4.25m each and carried out in partnership with energy giant E-on, was hit with delay after delay.

Some residents had as many as 13 completion dates for their homes and, even when work was signed off by Thistle, it was rejected as shoddy by householders.

An independent report said Thistle had "widespread compliance failures".

The housing regulator reports adds there were "serious weaknesses in Thistle's openness and communications with its tenants and service users".

It reads: "The governing body has accepted the findings from the review and has agreed an extensive and ambitious Governance Improvement Programme to address the

“ We asked questions and, in turn, we were constantly lied to

review recommendations and to bring about transformational change in the organisation.

"It has commissioned independent consultants to support it to deliver aspects of the programme over the next 12 months."

But watchdogs said the association had previously been slow to respond so they decided to appoint their own five-strong team of managers.

Resident David Crockwell, who works in the building trade, said he was unsurprised at the move and said action should have been taken sooner.

He said: "I've been saying for the past two years that Thistle is not managing its finances correctly and was unable to.

"I had taken my concerns to Nicola Sturgeon and to Susan Aitken and we have been waiting a long time for action."

Residents have faced issues, including problems with gardens, sewage and gas safety concerns



What do you think?

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Susan Aitken described the situation as "months of turmoil".

She said: "Along with several Toryglen residents, I had asked the Housing Regulator to urgently investigate whether Thistle Housing Association's governance was fit for purpose, following the months of turmoil local people have suffered due to the badly mismanaged E-on contract and works programme.

"I am very pleased the Regulator has responded so robustly to those concerns.

"I would urge Thistle to accept this intervention and drastically improve their procedures and practices.

"While I am in no doubt the bulk of the blame for this debacle lies with E-On, Thistle must accept their share of responsibility.

"They have badly let down people in Toryglen and they must work to rebuild trust."

THE OVERTONES



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catalogue of failures



Residents appealed to Nicola Sturgeon, who came out and toured the community.

When the Evening Times first reported on the problems, they included:

- Gardens being badly churned up and grass not replaced.
- Patio stones being damaged and not replaced.
- New roughcast being bald.
- Claims of raw sewage coming in to residents' flats.
- A gas contractor was removed from the site when safety issues were raised.

As a result of the gas safety issues five separate RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) notifications were raised.

As well as the physical problems with their homes, relations between householders and Thistle severely broke down. And there were concerns about contracts with several

“Thistle has recognised the need to change in order to comply with regulatory standards

residents, including one, David Crockwell, noticed staff member Linda Quinn signed their Minute of Agreement prior to the works starting as a witness but residents said Ms Quinn was not present when the documents were signed.

Ian Brennan, Director of Regulation at the Scottish Housing Regulator, said: “Thistle has recognised the need to change in order to comply with regulatory standards.

“Our intervention will support that change so that tenants and service users have the benefit of a fully compliant Registered Social Landlord.”

A spokeswoman for Thistle Housing Association said: “The association is reviewing the findings and recommendations highlighted in today's regulation plan. The association will continue to work in full co-operation with the Regulator as we move forward.”

Residents furious over botched home repairs

ON every visit to Kerrycroy Avenue and surrounding streets, more and more residents wanted to speak out about problems with their homes.

One couple had to have their house roughcasted four times before it was of accepted standard.

And, in one instance, repairs had to be made when the flue from their boiler was sealed in by workmen, causing a potential hazard.

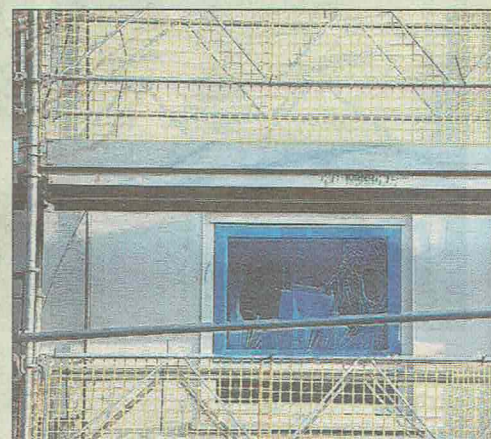
One block of flats had scaffolding erected that blocked their patio doors – used as main entrances to the homes.

For most, they could go out their back doors... but one woman in a wheelchair was left trapped in her home.

In another block of flats, blue plastic was used to cover residents' windows.

While they were told this would be for a few days, the plastic was there for five months, meaning they couldn't see out and had to have their lights on even in daytime.

One man told the Evening Times he'd come home from work to find two workmen having a physical fight in his front garden.



Windows were covered with blue plastic

This resulted in police and an ambulance being called – and further delays to his upgrade works.

Residents claimed they had no notice of the works until Thistle employees visited their homes to say they had to pay £2129.10 towards costs.

Some said they were visited on a Tuesday and told they had to pay up by the Thursday or work wouldn't go ahead.

One man had sewage flood his home six times.

In another property, an object was dropped from scaffolding and plunged through a patio – giving a narrow escape to the owner.

A group of residents set up a website to detail the problems they were having and Thistle bosses reported them to the police.

In another incident, a resident contacted Thistle to ask for a workman to repair a damaged entry system and was visited by police with an accusation of vandalism instead.

The Evening Times has repeatedly asked how much the project costs have now run to but neither E-on nor Thistle will divulge the answer.

CATRIONA STEWART

Six in hospital after shopping centre 'smell'

SIX people were hospitalised following an incident at a Glasgow shopping centre.

As reported by the Evening Times previously, over 50 victims required medical treatment after a chemical smell developed at Silverburn.

Shoppers described scenes of “pandemonium” as hundreds were evacuated on Wednesday afternoon after reports that several people were feeling unwell.

A spokesperson from the Scottish Ambulance Service said: “We dispatched our special operations team, four ambulances, two managers, Patient Transport resources, three paramedic response units and our Emergency Medical Retrieval Service team.

“Two patients were transported to Queen Elizabeth University Hospital and four patients were transported to Glasgow Royal Infirmary. A further 46 people were treated and discharged at the scene.”

No more Burns Suppers to be held by council

NORTH Lanarkshire Council will no longer host its annual Burns suppers.

The traditional celebration of Burns' birthday, which is observed by Scots all over the world, has been held since the council formed in the 1990s with over £200,000 raised for charity.

However, at the Civic Functions Group it was agreed to no longer host the event, usually held at the council's Motherwell headquarters.

A council report states “through changing circumstances year on year it is becoming more difficult to secure sponsors, acquire donated gifts for raffle prizes and stop attendance levels falling.”

The committee agreed that it would instead look at holding an alternative event at a different time of year to continue the council's fundraising.