

SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM EVERYONE AT KNOWES



Christmas Office Closure

Knowes Housing Association will close on Friday 24th December at 1pm
and will re-open on Tuesday, 4th January 2022 at 9am.

If you have an emergency repair
during these times, please contact
McDougalls on 0800 975 1234

For gas breakdown repairs
please contact City Building
0800 595 595.



Report from Erica Davidson, Chief Executive Officer, Knowes HA

As you will have read in our last Knowes Newsletter, our Director, Pierre Defence, retired in September after 14 years as director, 23 in total working for Knowes HA. The Committee and Staff at Knowes wish him a long, healthy and happy retirement and thank him for all his dedicated work for Knowes.

I am delighted and honoured to have been appointed as Chief Executive Officer for Knowes Housing Association on 1st October – a new title for the post and a new role for me after 23 years serving as Head of Finance for Knowes HA.

This is both a busy and exciting period for me as I settle into the CEO post. Following the easing of Covid restrictions in August we re-opened our office at 10 Field Road to our customers again. Some of our staff are currently working full time within our office again and others are working flexibly from home. Many of our customers now prefer telephone or zoom meetings with our staff team but for those who would like to talk to a member of our staff in person, then we can offer a face to face meeting at our office by appointment.

Our Annual General Meeting went ahead in person this year on the 7th September

and was well attended. It was with regret that Rhona Polak stepped down as Chair, having completed her five years' cycle. The Management Committee and staff wish to thank her for all her hard work and commitment over the years and are delighted that she is staying on as part of our management committee. In October the Committee elected a new Chairperson – Steven McCabe. Steven is new to our committee but has many years' experience working in the housing sector and is a welcome addition to our executive board members.

If you would like to become a share member, attend our AGM in September and be eligible to take part in our £100 draw each year, then please call Sandra (our Corporate Services Compliance Officer) on 01389 877752 option 5 or e-mail us at info@knowes.org. Sandra is also looking for members for her 'Community Working Group' – if you are keen to be involved in shaping the future of our services then she would love to hear from you.

In November we were pleased to announce the opening of our customer online portal and app. Customers are now able to access their account balances, make payments and report repairs via the portal. This is just one of the steps we are taking to further digitalise our services and offer our customers more convenient ways of engaging with us. We will also be introducing a customer kiosk in our reception area which will be able to offer customers information about not only our services but other services in the area which you may find helpful and supportive.

Also well done to Sandra for obtaining 50 I-pads from Connecting Scotland and distributing to eligible families who live in the area. If you think you or a family

you know may be eligible please contact your Housing Officer and we will put your name on the waiting list in the anticipation that we may be able to obtain more I-pads in the near future. We are also receiving services for our customers from Connecting Communities who can provide training and support on accessing services through the internet.

I am also happy to let you know that Knowes has recently been awarded £56,525 from the Community Recoveries Fund to provide the following services to our customers:-

- A dedicated staff member at the West Dunbartonshire Citizen's Advice Bureau to provide support and advice to our customers
- Time with the Leamy Foundation to develop a community growing area within the local Faifley Community
- Time with the Lennox Partnership to help our customers develop their employability skills and support into work
- Enabling the Y-sort-it group to work with Faifley youngsters in order to develop activities for them

You will find out more about these services and activities and how to access them on our website and facebook page or if you do not have internet access then you can telephone Knowes and talk to your Housing Officer or our Corporate Services department.

Over the next few months we are planning to carry out a stock condition survey of at least one third of our stock. We are employing a qualified surveyor to carry out this work for us and you will have received a letter from us giving some information about who he is and why we are carrying out the survey. The stock condition survey is essential to allow us to plan our future maintenance and improvement programme and if your property is selected as one of the properties to survey I would like to thank you in advance for taking part.

We will also be conducting our rent consultation survey in December and January of this year. In 2021 we were delighted to be able to offer our tenants a rent freeze. However with the rising costs of materials and services for our repairs and maintenance programme, it is unlikely that we will be



able to offer a rent freeze again for 2022. As always we will endeavour to keep the rent increase as low as possible whilst still maintaining the level of our services to you and we will be consulting you as to what you feel would be a fair rent increase for 2022.

Early in the new year, we are planning to carry out a full resident satisfaction survey and this will be to ask your opinion on the full range of services we provide you and the estate and community you live in. The survey will be carried out on our behalf by an independent company and as always your opinions are very important to us and will be instrumental in shaping and improving our services to you.

The Christmas period is coming along with problems arising from cold weather – most commonly burst pipes. The Property Services Team are running a feature in this newsletter on how best to avoid and mitigate some of the issues arising from the wintry weather conditions.

And lastly on behalf of the Management Committee and Staff at Knowes I would like to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year.

Tenancy Sustainment Officer

We now have a new TSO, Fiona Campbell, who has replaced Nikki Quinn who has joined the Association as permanent Housing Officer. The services available from the TSO include;

- New tenant visits
- Obtaining tenants new / second hand furniture
- Decoration vouchers
- Referring for food parcels/access to food banks
- Fuel vouchers availability
- Referrals to utility parties to shop around for cheaper/better tariffs/behavioural changes in the homes to save energy

- Referral for welfare check in order to maximise income and ensure obtaining correct benefits
- Referral to debt advice in relation to budgeting/debt
- Referrals to recruitment/employment agencies to help get back into work/training courses

Fiona is available should you wish any assistance in help with your tenancy. Her contact details are

Email address:

fiona.campbell@clydebank-ha.org.uk

Mobile: 07494 170426 (between 9am and 5pm only Monday to Friday)

Customer Portal

The Committee and Staff are delighted to announce the launch of our new internet portal. If you are a customer of Knowes – a tenant or a factored owner – you will have received a letter detailing how you can access the portal.

An app for your mobile is available from the Apple App store or Google Play.

We would encourage you to log into the portal and set up your online account with us.

On the portal you will be able to find information on your customer account, make a card payment, report a repair, report anti-social behaviour and make a complaint as well as just generally contact Knowes.

Annual Assurance Statement for the financial year 2020-2021

The Governing Body of Knowes Housing Association confirms that the Association complied with the regulatory requirements set out in chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework over the period of August 2020 through to October 2021, with the exception of failing to carry out gas servicing to all of our properties.

This was due to access problems resulting from tenants self-isolating or shielding, this matter has now been addressed.

In August this year our independent auditors carried out a full independent review of Knowes compliance with the Regulatory Framework and other legislation, and with the exception of gas servicing, noted that Knowes was 100% compliant over the period noted above.

We will be collecting equalities information in accordance with the current guidance as part of our customer survey which will be conducted in autumn 2021.

Approved at the management committee on 5th October 2021.

Steven McCabe
Chairperson



Christmas Rent Payment

As we head towards Christmas please remember that it is important that you continue to pay your rent. We know that there are many pressures that come with this time of year, but we cannot continue our services if we don't receive rent payments for your home.

If you are struggling with payment's please contact us and we can put you in touch with money advice services and also our Tenancy Sustainment Officer.



**citizens
advice
scotland**

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

We have recently started partnership working with CAB who will be available to any resident who has money and debt advice or benefits issues. CAB will provide advice via their office, on the phone or through outreach work where required, by appointment. Contact details are as follows:

Jack Huey - HA and CAB Adviser

07935 218728

RSL@wdcab.co.uk

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE
CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU**

You can contact us for advice
in the following ways:

**FREEPHONE
0800 484 0136**



Over 18, unemployed and live in West Dunbartonshire?

The Lennox Partnership can help you into work!

- Help with CVs, Cover Letters and Applications
- Searching for jobs
- IT and interview skills
- Training
- Jobs from our business partners
- Funding for uniforms, PPE and transportation costs
- Up to 2 years of pre-employment and in work support



GIVE YOUR JOB SEARCH A FAIR START WITH THE LENNOX PARTNERSHIP

Customer Offer

We'll provide you with a dedicated Job Coach who will assist you in all aspects of employment help, including: a new or updated CV, application support, interview preparation, funding for training and travel.

We Can Help You With

Job-related qualifications and accreditations like a CSCS Card, SIA Licence, Elementary Food Hygiene SCQF, and many more. All we ask is that you give your best effort, and attend your phone or video call appointments.

Fair Start Scotland is a free, voluntary service, tailored to each individual who uses it. We ensure your needs are looked after with your input, and with your goals in mind.

To find out more, contact us on 07423 002842.



The Lennox Partnership
Getting Scotland into work.



Fairer Scotland
Scottish Government

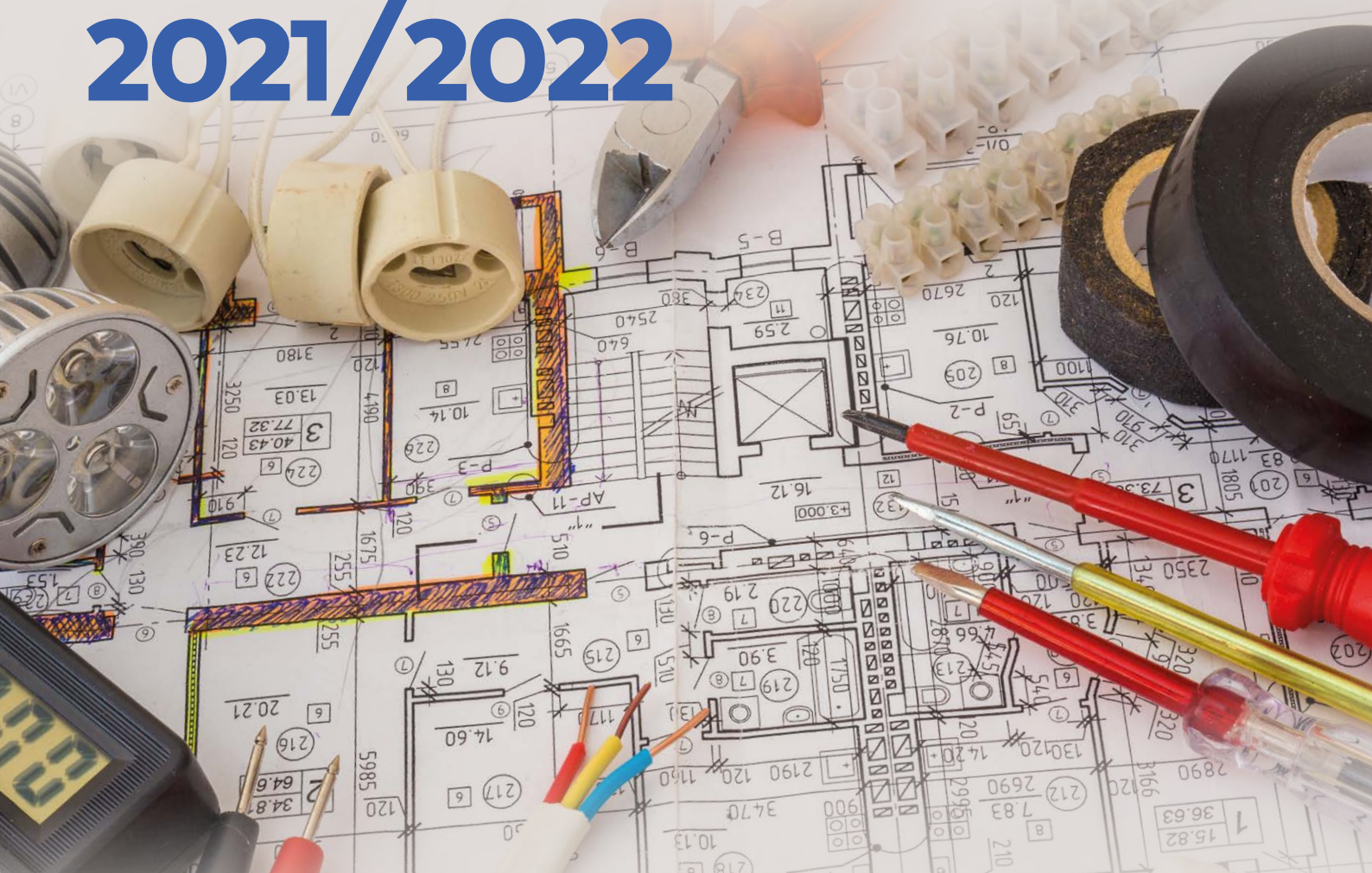


fair start scotland

Get in touch to find out if you're eligible for help to get into work
Friendly, person-centred help

FSSduncontact@thelennoxpartnership.org

Maintenance Programme 2021/2022



Description of Work	Progress
Kitchens Phase 13, Type 4, 8 & 9. Certain addresses within the following streets (Whitehill Cres, Limekilns St, Lennox Dr, Abbeylands Rd, Langfaulds Cres, Quarryknowe St, John Burnside Dr, Mealkirk St, Ferclay St, Craigbanzo St, Watchmeal Cres)	Surveys complete. Installations have been delayed due to material shortages. Awaiting installation dates from our contractor.
Fire Safety Compliance – Smoke and Heat	In progress. Tenants who haven't had their smoke and heat detectors installed should call the office immediately for an installation date.
Bathrooms Type 10 & 14 (Langfaulds Cres, Langside St, Addresses outwith Faifley)	Going out to tender in November/December 2021. Anticipated start date of February 2022.
Kitchens Type 16, 17 & 18 (Quarryknowe St, Faifley Rd, Foxknowe Gards, Orbiston Dr, Swallow Rd)	Going out to tender in November/December 2021. Anticipated start date of February 2022.
Replacement Doors – Waulkingmill Rd	On site and 90% complete.
Electrical Testing	Electrical testing commenced in July 2021. Please ensure you allow access when contacted by our contractor.

Christmas Safety Tips

Christmas is a special time for celebration and should not end in tragedy because of the extra hazards that are present at this time of year. So when you're decking the halls make sure you follow our simple advice and stay safe.

Fairy Lights

Unplug fairy lights or other electrical Christmas decorations when you leave the house or go to bed.

Check fairy lights are in good working order and replace any bulbs that have blown.

Bulbs can get very hot, don't let them touch materials that can scorch or burn easily, such as paper or fabrics.

Make sure the fuse in the plug is the correct rating.

If you need to plug more than one appliance into an electrical socket use a multi-socket adaptor which is fitted with a fuse and has surge protection.



Selecting a Tree for Christmas

Always buy your tree from a reputable retailer to ensure the freshness and quality. Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needle should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a potential fire hazard.



Decorations

Decorations made of light tissue paper or cardboard burn easily.

Don't attach them to lights or heaters.

Don't put them immediately above or around the fireplace.

Keep them away from candles.



Caring for Your Tree

Don't place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace, heat vent or candles. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

Christmas Trees

Special fire safety precautions need to be taken when keeping a live tree in the house. A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly gases.

Disposing of Your Tree

Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling centre or having it taken away by a community pickup service.

Candles

Lots of us use candles to help decorate the house or give the place a more festive feel, however, candles do pose a significant fire risk.

If you do use candles or tea lights here are some key safety tips to keep you, your home and your family safe:

- Make sure that when in use, candles are secured in a proper holder and away from materials that may catch fire – like curtains, Christmas trees, decorations and toys.
- Children and pets should not be left alone with lit candles.
- Put candles out when you leave the room, and make sure they're put out completely at night.
- Trim the wick to ¼ inch each time before burning. Long or crooked wicks can cause uneven burning, dripping or flaring.
- Don't move candles once they are lit
- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations on burn time and proper use.
- Do not burn several candles close together as this might cause flaring (mainly with tea-lights).

- Always make sure tea-lights are placed in a proper holder. The foil container which tea lights come in can get very hot. They can melt through plastic, such as a bath, and have the potential to start a house fire.
- Use a snuffer or a spoon to put out candles. It's safer than blowing them out when embers can fly.



How do I test my Fire & Carbon Monoxide Alarms?

Performing a regular test is a vital part of ensuring continued Fire and Carbon Monoxide detection. Alarms should be tested monthly to ensure everything is working correctly.

Direct test from the alarm:

- Check that the green light on the alarm is on (this shows that it is receiving mains power).
- Press the 'Test' button for 10 seconds.
- The alarm will sound loudly, so that you know the alarm is functioning.



- If you have other alarms in the property, they will most likely be linked together. This means that if one alarm sounds, it will send a signal to trigger the other alarms in the property – so you can hear them sound in the background.
- Finally, repeat the above steps on all the other alarms in the property.



Annual Rent Increase 2022/23 Consultation

As normal at this time of year, we will be beginning our consultation with tenants on our Annual Rent Increase.

Consultation questionnaires will be issued by email early December 2021. However, if you wish to receive a paper copy of the consultation questionnaire, please contact the Corporate Services team on 01389 877752 (option 5) and a paper copy and a prepaid envelope to return your questionnaire will be provided.

**Remember,
your views
matter.**

Community Working Group (formerly Scrutiny Panel) – Members Wanted!

**GET !
INVOLVED!**

The Community Working Group is an independent, customer-focused advisory and consultative group to Knowes Housing Association that energetically challenge policy and practice.

As part of our adherence to the Scottish Social Housing Charter, Knowes Housing Association is committed to greater involvement of tenants and residents in decision making and scrutiny of service delivery that will lead to greater customer satisfaction.

The Community Working Group will play a critical role in ensuring that services are delivered to the highest standards. The Community Working Group is a tenant-led, self-

regulation group, and will carry out its scrutiny role by having access to staff of the Association to request information and challenge performance where appropriate.

The group will meet on a quarterly basis either in person in the Association office or via Zoom and will discuss a number of topics including Resident Satisfaction Surveys, policy reviews and quarterly performance information.

If you are interested in joining our Community Working Group then please contact our Corporate Services Compliance Officer, Sandra McPhee on 01389 877752 (option 5) or by email at smcphee@knowes.org.

12Guitars Hit the Right Note in Faifley

Steve and Gerry were delighted to visit Edinbarnet Primary school in Faifley, near Glasgow recently to handover a set of guitars and ukuleles to the school. The donation of the instruments was made to Teacher Colin Clark following an introduction by Pierre DeFence, former Director of Knowes Housing Association who work closely with the local community in Faifley.

The instruments included acoustic, semi-acoustic, electric, and bass guitars and a selection of ukuleles. The instruments were a mix of new guitars and ukuleles donated to 12Guitars by the UK Charity, Music for All www.musicforall.org.uk and guitars that have been donated by individuals and re-cycled by 12Guitars.

Steve Plummer, Director and Co-Founder of 12Guitars commented "the opportunities and additional skills that guitar playing can introduce are many and we are thrilled to help the staff and pupils of Edinbarnet Primary on their musical journey".

Pierre De Fence, former Director at Knowes Housing Association added "we are delighted to continue our support in the local community and were pleased to introduce 12Guitars to Edinbarnet Primary to enable these musical opportunities for young people"

Mrs McCormick, Head Teacher at Edinbarnet Primary and Teacher Colin Clark thanked 12Guitars and Knowes Housing Association for collaborating to support the new music programme at the school.



Gerry 12Guitars, Pierre De Fence - Knowes Housing Association, Mrs McCormick Head Teacher - Edinbarnet, Colin Clark Teacher - Edinbarnet Primary, Steve Plummer - 12Guitars



Steve Plummer - 12Guitars, Pierre De Fence - Knowes Housing Association, Gerry Thorogood - 12Guitars, Colin Clark, Teacher - Edinbarnet Primary

COLOUR ME IN!



CAN YOU SPOT 10 DIFFERENCES?



CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

T	H	O	L	I	D	A	Y	P	O	X	I	Y	S
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V	D	W	T	K	E	L	V	E	S	X	K	S	M
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- CANDY CANE
- SANTA
- MISTLETOE
- BOW
- WREATH
- CHEER
- CHRISTMAS
- SNOWMAN
- ELVES
- REINDEER
- GARLAND
- PRESENTS
- TREE
- HOLIDAY
- WINTER
- JOLLY



Be Prepared for Winter

As the cold weather starts to arrive we have prepared some tips for residents to help you deal with problems at this time of year.

- Make sure you know where your stopcock is located so you can turn off your water if you have a burst pipe.
- Check with your neighbours that turning off the water has not affected their supply.
- If you are away for a few days set your heating to come on a couple of times a day. This will greatly reduce the risk of pipes freezing.
- If you discover a frozen pipe thaw it out slowly by using hot water bottles or towels soaked in warm water. DO NOT use direct heat such as blowtorches as this may cause permanent damage to the pipes. If you are in any doubt contact our Property Services team for advice.
- If you cannot heat all of your rooms, make sure you keep your living room warm throughout the day heat your bedroom before going to bed.
- Wearing the right kind of clothes can help keep you much warmer. Layers are best to keep the base of your back warm and heat you from the core.
- Keep a torch and extra batteries in an easy to access place in case of a power cut.

INSURANCE

- Escape of water can cause a great deal of damage to your property and to those of your neighbours. Please remember that Knowes HA only provides building insurance to cover our own properties and for those owners in tenement properties where it is required in their title deeds. We do not provide contents insurance and therefore it is recommended that you arrange your own contents insurance to cover your own belongings e.g., furniture, floor coverings, white goods and electrical appliances.
- For those owners who have buildings insurance with Knowes HA, our insurer has informed us that from the 1st April 2022, the excess on escape of water claims will increase to £350.00 per claim. This is because the number and cost of these claims has been increasing significantly over the last few years.



Y SORT IT

Are coming back to Faifley



FAIFLEY

YOUTH CLUBS

Starting Thursday 2nd of December in Skypoint

Faifley Junior Youth Club

Ages 10-12 : 5.30-- 7.00pm

Faifley Senior Youth Club

Ages 12+ : 7.30 - 9.00pm

2022 Calendar

JANUARY 2022

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FEBRUARY 2022

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MARCH 2022

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APRIL 2022

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MAY 2022

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JUNE 2022

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JULY 2022

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AUGUST 2022

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SEPTEMBER 2021

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OCTOBER 2022

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NOVEMBER 2022

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DECEMBER 2022

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