

## Competition time!

There are prizes up for grabs in this issue of Tenants First.

### Quick Quiz

If you've read Tenants First closely you will have noticed that scattered throughout the newsletter are a series of facts about Argyll and Bute. For the chance to win a £10 Woolworths vouchers search the newsletter for answers to these 5 questions and send them to ACHA, along with your name and address, to arrive by Monday April 17. The first entry drawn from the hat will win the prize.

- Q1 How many kilometres of coastline does Argyll and Bute have?
- Q2 Which Scottish king is said to have died in Cardross parish?
- Q3 What percentage of Argyll and Bute's population is aged over 65?
- Q4 Argyll and Bute had a landmass greater than several European countries, which country do we mention on page 1?
- Q5 What is the average age of a resident of Argyll and Bute?

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G	C	M	L	G	D	K	L	U	P	I	E
K	T	H	T	E	R	O	I	Y	S	L	R
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ACHA  
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REPAIRS  
ARGYLL  
TENANTS  
BUTE

Wordsearch

For the chance to win a further £10 Woolworths voucher correctly complete the word search and return, with your name and address, by Monday April 17. The first name drawn after this date will win the prize. Good luck!

**fact!** ACHA will be Scotland's eighth largest housing association and come transfer, more than 1 in 7 households across Argyll and Bute will be ACHA tenants

**fact!** Argyll and Bute has more coastline than the whole of France, with more than 4,500km (2,796 miles)

### Coming soon

ACHA would like to encourage tenants and others to look after their gardens and to have pride in their communities. To help towards this ACHA would like to offer sponsorship of garden competitions run by tenants groups. If you're interested in getting involved please contact Gillian McInnes for further information, call 01546 604088 or email gillian.mcinnis@acha.co.uk.

### Drawing competition

We'd also like to open a competition for kids to design a play park of the future. If you are under 14 and can do a colourful drawing using your imagination then you could be in with a chance of winning a prize. Just send your drawing to the address below before Monday 22 May to be in with a chance of winning. Remember to include your name, age and address.



Argyll Community Housing Association  
63-65 Chalmers Street, Ardrishaig, Argyll PA30 8DX

#### SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS NEEDS

If you, a relative or neighbour needs assistance with understanding this bulletin because of visual impairment, learning difficulty or language reasons please contact us and we will be glad to help.

**GET IN TOUCH...**   
**01436 65 8927**

visit our website: [www.acha.co.uk](http://www.acha.co.uk) or send an email to [christine.johnston@acha.co.uk](mailto:christine.johnston@acha.co.uk)

If you have any comments or queries on this newsletter please contact:

Dan Hughes, TNC, tel 01698 420420, fax 01698 424000 or email [team@tnc.uk.com](mailto:team@tnc.uk.com)

# tenantsfirst



April 2006

Putting Tenants First

## Moving forward

With the ballot now behind us everyone at ACHA is working hard to get things ready for the handover of housing from the Council expected to take place in July. Inside this issue of Tenants First you'll find out what's been going on since the start of the year, as well as more about our plans to involve you in ACHA's decision making. You'll also see that we're giving you the chance to win with the introduction of a competition section to the newsletter, turn to the back page to find out more.

**fact!** 18.4% of the population of Argyll and Bute is aged over 65 and the average age of a resident is 41 years



The ACHA team have been consulting on services for older tenants, turn to page 3 to find out more

## Meet the management team...

A further cog in the ACHA wheel is now in place with the appointment of the senior management team who will be working with Chief Executive Alastair MacGregor to lead ACHA in the delivery of better housing and improved services across Argyll's communities. Since the turn of the year ACHA has appointed four directors who will be responsible for overseeing the smooth handover from the Council and ensuring that the needs of tenants are met, now and in the future.

Turn over to meet the team >>>

**fact!** Argyll and Bute is the 2nd largest geographical area in Scotland and has a landmass greater than Belgium

### Inside this issue:

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The new Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services is Christine Johnston, who started her new post in February. Christine has been working with ACHA throughout the transfer process and is based in Helensburgh. Previously with the Council, Christine has more than 18 years working with tenants in Argyll and Bute.

*"Having worked with the Council for many years I feel that I'm in a strong position to know the needs of our tenants. For the first time, and thanks to the support of tenants in the ballot, we are in a position to really do something about it. I share with the whole ACHA team a real desire to tackle the housing and community development issues that affect our tenants and, once transfer takes place I look forward to helping make a real difference."*



Nick Pollard is the new director of Finance and IT. Joining ACHA with six years experience in social housing, Nick previously worked with an Edinburgh financial consultancy and prior to that with the Housing Corporation, the English equivalent of Communities Scotland.

*"In my experience here so far, I've found the enthusiasm and commitment to be both infectious and inspiring. I want to use these fantastic attributes to help deliver safe, secure and modern homes that exceed tenants' aspirations. At the same time I would like to see tenants offered greater choice and more effective and efficient services, both now and in the future."*

All four of ACHA's new Directors have met with staff and the ACHA Management Committee in recent weeks and all, with the exception of Christine Johnston, will work from the ACHA office in Ardrishaig. Christine will continue to work from the ACHA office at Blairvadach House near Helensburgh.

## Looking for you to get involved

In order to ensure that our plans meet your needs, we have recently completed a series of sessions aimed at recruiting members for the four ACHA area committees. The four sessions held across Argyll and Bute met with a positive response, with more than 30 tenants coming along.

ACHA's four Area Committees will serve Helensburgh and Lomond, Bute and Cowal, Oban, Lorn and the

Linda Haig has been appointed as ACHA's Director of Investment and Regeneration and began her new job in February. Originally from Oban, and with family connections on Bute, Linda joins ACHA from a housing association in the Western Isles. She has 20 years experience working in the housing sector including developing new housing in areas of need and improving conditions for existing tenants.

*"I would like to think that we will improve people's living conditions and assist in the regeneration of communities. For the broader community, I would like to see ACHA improve the opportunities for people in Argyll to find affordable rented housing."*



Colette Benham is ACHA's new Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services and will take up her post in April. Colette is originally from Sussex but has family in Argyll and Bute and has several years experience working for a registered social landlord in the southeast.

*"I really want to ensure ACHA staff are well trained and motivated, and have the confidence and resources to be able to deliver excellent tenant services. I will also make it a goal to ensure that area office opening times are as flexible as possible. I want to promote active community involvement links to stimulate training and job opportunities within Argyll & Bute."*



**fact!** ACHA will be one of Argyll's largest employers

Isles and Mid Argyll and Kintyre. Members of the four Area Committees will make vital decisions on local housing issues including helping to plan priorities for new housing investment, shaping housing services for all tenants, especially the elderly, younger people and children, all with the aim of delivering ACHA's promise to improve the quality of social housing across Argyll and Bute.

## ACHA seeking input from older tenants

If you're a slightly older Council tenant (aged over 65) then you might well have received a visit from a member of ACHA staff over the last few weeks. As promised in the run up to last year's ballot, we are currently looking at improving the quality and range of services offered to tenants and how we can work with other organisations to improve these services following transfer, starting with those received by older tenants.

Currently looking at elderly services and speaking to a broad section of tenants aged over 65 are Donald, Garrick and Seonaid, the three transfer assistants who worked so hard in the run-up to the ballot going door-to-door, speaking to you about transfer and ACHA's plans.

ACHA Chairman Norman Beaton commented, "Ahead of last year's ballot we told tenants that we would be conducting a review of services should they vote 'yes'. After the hugely positive result we have decided not to wait until after transfer but to begin work now on talking to tenants about improving services.



*"In order for this review to be as wide-ranging as possible, we want to get the opinions of as many people as we can, and not simply for our research to be limited to those tenants that our team are able to visit. Therefore I would urge any tenant or member of the wider community who feels that they can make a contribution to elderly services to get in touch."*

If you haven't yet received a visit but have views on elderly services then please give us a call to discuss. You can phone Gillian McInnes on 01546 604088 or email [gillian.mcinnnes@acha.co.uk](mailto:gillian.mcinnnes@acha.co.uk). If you can wait a bit longer then, following transfer, a comprehensive postal questionnaire will be sent out to all tenants giving everyone the opportunity to comment.

Once we've completed the initial review of elderly services we will then be looking at services for children and young people with a questionnaire targeting not just tenants but also teenagers to look at ways that we can help improve community facilities, activities and services for young people in our communities.



**fact!** Argyll and Bute is the birthplace of the Scottish nation and the Scots Gaelic language and Robert the Bruce died in Cardross parish

Even if you couldn't make it along to one of the sessions, it's not too late to get involved. If you are an interested and committed individual who would like to be considered for a role on one of the Area Committees please contact Gillian McInnes at ACHA, 63-65 Chalmers Street, Ardrishaig, PA30 8DX or call 01546 604088. Alternatively you can send an email requesting further information to [gillian.mcinnnes@acha.co.uk](mailto:gillian.mcinnnes@acha.co.uk).

Area Committees are expected to meet 10 times a year with meetings taking place every four to six weeks. Although positions are voluntary and unpaid, ACHA will cover out of pocket expenses such as travel. ACHA will also provide training for committee members. The majority of the Committee members will be tenants, however there will be a number of places available to non-tenants. All committee members must be aged 18 or over.