

Welcome to the 6th Edition of your Newsletter



This was the message during lockdown, beautifully illustrated by one of our tenants young child.

See more on page 3.



Last year's prize draw was won by Mr Flanagan and Ms Gemmell from Oban – when Mr Flanagan received the call he was delighted to know that someone was giving him money and not asking for it!



All owners that pay by monthly Direct Debit were automatically entered into the draw and win £50's worth of high street vouchers - and we are doing it again this year.

Direct debit is a good way to spread your costs over the year and all owners paying or setting up a new direct debit by Friday 8th January 2021 will be included in the free draw to be held in February.



Good luck everyone!



To set up a direct debit contact - 0800 028 2755 – you will still receive your quarterly invoices to check what you are being charged for.

Something to Like!



If you think ACHA’s Facebook page is only for tenants, then think again.

Argyll Community
Housing Association—
ACHA Group

Containing advice for the community in general, including news and updates on topics such as local initiatives, benefit and pensions, council services, health advice and child safety.

We plan to add news for our factoring customers in future posts. Add our page to your likes and keep up to date with what’s happening in your community and with your properties.

We also feature news and general interest items, like our recent “Working with a View” feature, pictures of the views staff have enjoyed whilst working from home, some of which are pictured here.



Local children, aged 12 and under, were asked to paint or draw rainbows and had some brilliant pictures, another one of which features on the front cover.



New challenges - Covid-19

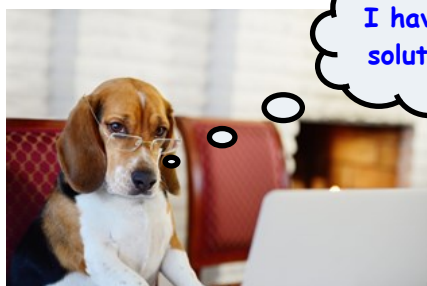


This year we have all encountered huge changes. Everyone has experienced restrictions and limitations put on us by the pandemic and we are now trying to adjust to the “new normal”.



Faced with these challenges as an organisation, we have successfully adapted to an entirely new way of working, not just working from home but accessing equipment, managing restrictions on what can be safely done and figuring out alternative ways of working - as well as adapting to the fast pace of guideline changes to ensure our customers and staff are kept safe.

Contacting our customers by post has proved challenging. **Do you have an alternative contact, such as email or a mobile number?**



I have a solution!

Please update your contact details

Mobile; Home Phone; Email;
Correspondence address;
preferred contact address

We are very happy to contact you by text - it's a quick and easy way of making contact, keeping you updated or sending reminders. We can also email updates to you if we have your details.



If you provide us with a mobile number and you **don't wish to receive texts** – please **advise us and you can opt out**.

Not everyone has a mobile or email - so if that's the case we will continue to send information to you, just make sure your contact details are accurate and up to date.



Return contact slip on last page to any office or

Phone: 0800 028 2755

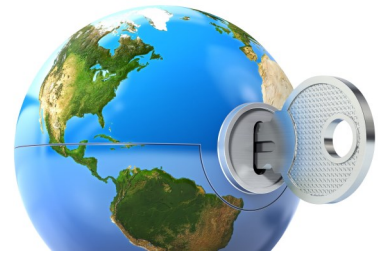
Email: factoring@acha.co.uk

<https://www.acha.co.uk/services-update-poc-details>



Keeping Busy During Lockdown...

Following on the decision made on 23 March, all ACHA staff were moved to home working, as the UK entered an unprecedented lockdown to contain the COVID-19 virus.



Even though offices are shut, we have continued to work hard from our homes.

During this period, we have:-

- ◆ Introduced a new system for producing invoices and statements;
- ◆ Created a gutter cleaning programme;
- ◆ Reviewed, amended and finalised the block inspection processes;
- ◆ Automating our debt recover procedures;
- ◆ And continued to deal with day to day customer queries.



You will see more details in Page 5 - a lot of this work stemmed from feedback you gave us.



ACHA and AHFA have continued to carry out emergency repairs to communal areas. Any other repairs that have been reported have been held in abeyance but will be phased in now our repairs service has been resumed.

If you have any queries about repairs or anything else, then contact your local office or call our Customer Service Centre on **0800 028 2755**.

What we've been doing



Gutter cleaning:

A programme has been created for all formally factored blocks to be included in the two yearly cyclical. This is the recommended timeframe for regular cleans, however, there may be occasions when some blocks require a more frequent clean and these are reviewed on a block by block basis.

Block inspections:

An extensive review of the block inspection process has been carried out, new inspection reports created and a programme put in place to carry out inspections to all factored blocks on a three yearly cycle.



When giving a general assessment, the surveys will also give timeframes, proposed work and recommendations. This fresh new approach will allow you to plan for future works in advance of them becoming necessary.

Staff training will be carried out in 2020/21. After this, we aim to complete the first comprehensive reports for all blocks within three years. The initial reports will ask for your feedback and we would appreciate as much feedback as possible to assist us in continuing to improve the service!

Close cleaning:



Earlier this year, owners in specific areas were asked if they would like a close cleaning service introduced. It was hoped to go ahead where the majority of owners were in favour of the proposal. Unfortunately, the guidance relating to Covid-19 and additional external pressures on residents has meant that this has been delayed.

Please be assured we will revisit it in the near future and keep you notified of progress.

Factored Owners Conference:

There was a mixed response to the level of interest in holding a factoring conference. We have looked at all the comments, areas where factored blocks are located and what you are interested in.

Current circumstances and restrictions mean we have not been able to develop this as we would have wished but the idea has only been delayed not cancelled. We will keep you updated.



Work goes on

Service Provision Update from Chief Executive, Alastair MacGregor

As ACHA follows the Scottish Government guidance on the route map through the crisis, our service provision will change to reflect the restrictions appropriate to the phase determined by the Scottish Government.

- From the 7th September, ACHA has been accepting and recording all repairs as normal, however due to the ongoing challenges in delivering services due to COVID - 19 there will be delays in completing non-emergency works and we apologise in advance for any delays and inconvenience caused. Emergencies will still be treated as a priority;
- Repairs staff and our contractors have been provided with personal protective equipment and will use these when assessing or carrying out repairs. Please observe social distancing to allow them to carry out their tasks safely;
- Housing & Neighbourhood services staff have restarted Estate inspections across Argyll. If you see them out about, please do not approach them as during phase two they will not be visiting homes but will be available for advice by phone or email;
- Play parks have reopened however we would encourage parents to supervise their children's use of the facilities to ensure social distancing & encourage children to use other equipment if their preference is in use. Children should be told not to put their hands near their face after touching equipment & must wash their hands thoroughly after leaving the park. We thank you for using the facilities responsibly.

Our offices are still closed for public access and will remain so until they can safely reopen for staff and public use.

Many of our staff remain working remotely but this will not affect service delivery.

We will continue to review our service provision as Scottish Government advice is released. Please follow our facebook page or consult our website for the latest information.



0800 028 2755

achacustomerservicecentre@acha.co.uk



Estimates and Tenders: what you need to know

ACHA has introduced a new Purchasing System which replaces the Association's existing Approved Contractors List.

What does that mean? Work where we need to get estimates, quotes or tender for work will go through an electronic process set up in line with Procurement Regulations and Inspections to ensure full compliance.



Will you still use your subsidiary for repairs? Yes, Argyll Homes for All (AHFA) will carry out routine repairs and maintenance and price for more costly work on the same terms as other contractors.

How does this affect me? The system aims to encourage more local contractors to get involved — to get local people working in local areas. Costs will be quicker to obtain, are regulated through the system and invite more competitive costings.



So, what are the benefits for me? Local firms will benefit from additional work in their local areas; costs will remain competitive; and the system is set up and ready to go which aims to speed up the costing process. The system is a 'live' process and contractors can be added at any point.

Is there anything else I need to know? Yes, as a public body we must work to comply with the terms of procurement. This may mean for some work we cannot award a contract on the lowest costs. While this may be the case on occasion, contracts may also be awarded to take account of quality.



The information above is to give you an insight into the process we follow along with our aim to use more local contractors for certain types of work.

Contractors must be willing to put forward detailed costings of work and our Investment and Regeneration Department have actively engaged with them to encourage this and provide support for applications.

As with previous larger works, we will continue to consult with owners in line with the consultation and notification levels set out in your Factoring Agree-

Useful contacts & Financial Advice

Argyll & Bute Council

Tel:	01546 605 522	Website:	www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
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Safer Scotland—support groups

Tel:	03002 444 000	Website:	www.readyscotland.org/coronavirus/where-to-find-additional-support
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Independent Financial Advice

Many people are finding themselves in new territory with financial situations and may not know who to turn to for assistance, guidance or reassurance. Some agencies that can help, should you be encountering difficulty, are:-



Citizens Advice

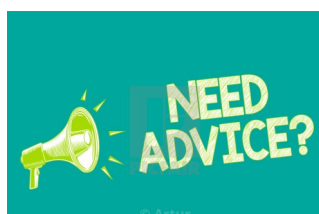
Tel:	01546 605 550	Website:	www.cas.org.uk
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Consumer Advice

Tel:	08081 646 000	Website:	www.consumeradvice.scot
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Consumer Advice

Tel:	08088 084 000	Website:	www.nationaldebtline.org
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If you want ACHA to help, we can -

You have access to ACHA's Welfare Rights Service who offer free and confidential advice in relation to benefits.

Please call 0800 028 2755 if you wish to be referred to a member of the Welfare Rights Team or email the Team direct on:-

welfarerights@acha.co.uk

Survey, Painting and Membership



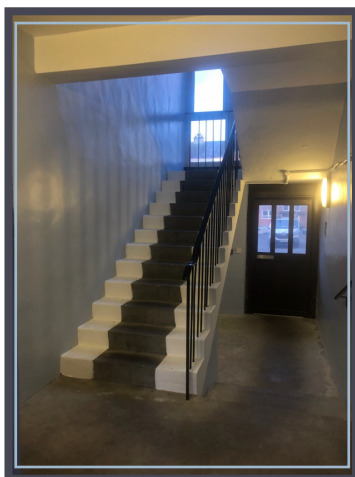
Ears are listening.

Factored Owners Survey

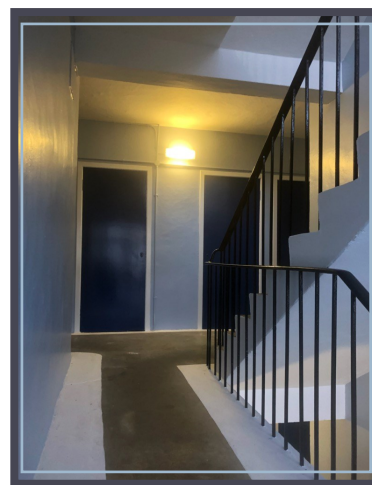
The feedback you give in surveys is invaluable as it helps us review and improve our services.

We aim to carry out the next Factored Owners Survey early in 2021.

In the meantime, if you have any comments or suggestions, please call us to discuss it with us. You can reach us on any of the numbers listed for our local offices.



Drumfork Court,
Helensburgh
had a new lick of paint



Membership of ACHA

Membership of ACHA is open to anyone over the age of 18. The '£1 for life' membership entitles you to vote at ACHA's Annual General Meeting including the right to vote on the elections to the Board of Management (you may also put yourself forward to be elected).

Membership is open to those supporting our aims who are:

- Our Tenants;
- Other residents of Argyll and Bute;
- Other persons who can contribute particular community, business or professional experience or skills relevant to the Association.

We welcome applications from organisations as well as individuals.

You can read more and check your eligibility by downloading a Membership Application Form from www.acha.co.uk/resources/August-2018-Membership-poster-with-application-form-on-reverse.pdf

Our contact details

Keep us up to date with changes?

Let us know if you move home, are selling, have a new contact number or would prefer contact by email or text. We need this to ensure that we hold up to date information for correspondence or if we need to contact you about your property.

To check or update your details please contact the Customer Service Centre on:-

0800 028 2755

Email your local office with up to date contact details as listed on page 11

or through our website: www.acha.co.uk/services-update-poc-details

Bute

housing.bute@acha.co.uk
01546 605870

Helensburgh & Lomond

housing.lomond@acha.co.uk
01546 605920

Mid Argyll

housing.midargyll@acha.co.uk
01546 605800

Cowal

housing.cowal@acha.co.uk
01546 605950

Islay

housing.islay@acha.co.uk
01546 605890

Oban, Lorn & Isles

housing.lorn@acha.co.uk
01546 605930

Kintyre

housing.kintyre@acha.co.uk
01546 605880

If you would like this newsletter in larger print, in an alternative language, on audio CD or in an electronic format or you would like someone to read it or explain any of it please contact any ACHA office who can arrange this for you.



PRIVATE OWNER CONTACT DETAILS

Owner Names (1)

Owner Names (2)

Owner Names (3)

Factored property address:

Postcode:

Correspondence Address:

(if different)

Postcode:

Email Address:

Tel No - Home:

Please tick your preferred number: ✓

Tel No - Mobile:

Tel No - Other:

Date:

Please complete & return to your local office
