



Tenants first

Autumn/Winter 2019



Putting Our Tenants and Our Communities First

Book Your Place for the 2020 ACHA Tenant and Member Conference!



We are holding ACHA's Tenant and Member Conference, on Saturday 8th February 2020 in Inveraray and would love to see you there!

Join our staff, together with governing body members and other tenants and members from across Argyll & Bute to discuss and share views and ideas on **how to improve performance, investing in your home and involving young people.** This is an opportunity for local people to have a real say in the decisions that affect their homes and communities. Your suggestions, compliments and even complaints help ACHA improve and provide better services.

There is an information zone where ACHA and other agencies can give you advice and information on a wide range of issues such as Welfare Rights, Fire Safety and Tenant Participation.

Spaces are limited, if you would like to come along, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GG8QNYH> or www.acha.co.uk, pick up a booking form from your local office or contact **Stuart McTaggart** on **01546 605811** or via email: stuart.mctaggart@acha.co.uk if you have any questions or queries.



Argyll Community Housing Association – ACHA Group
Join us online to get the latest news and information

Alastair MacGregor

I was struck when looking at the draft of this newsletter that “community” was everywhere. It forced me to check the dictionary definition and among a number of references the words “sharing” and “together” came out. If you look at the number of examples of community wellbeing from across Argyll and Bute in our current newsletter we see “sharing” and “together” leap out at you. It starts with the voluntary Board of

Management of representatives from all over our area and includes good neighbours on Mull, tenants and volunteers in Tarbert celebrating and supporting 40 years of sheltered housing in the village, as well as 22 other examples of community action initiatives. That spirit of engagement and activity is both humbling and inspiring at a time when we see so much division and friction in our news reels every night. As a community-based housing association it is wonderful to see such an ethos of community support, engagement and participation. Argyll and Bute is a large and diverse area. Communities are at the heart of that diversity. From my perspective, having read the draft of this newsletter it was so positive to see the live examples of that community activity. Well done to everyone who has been involved in these initiatives.

As I write this article we are fast approaching a General Election and Christmas. It is easy sometimes for the day to day issues to be missed in the news around Brexit and the wider world. From ACHA's perspective we will continue to raise the issue wherever and whenever we can on the importance of decent, affordable housing as being a key issue for the future of our communities in Argyll and Bute. As we approach Christmas it is also worth remembering that the baby Jesus was born homeless in a stable, in Bethlehem. For all faiths and none, housing was as important 2,000 plus years ago as it is today.

With my very best wishes.

Alastair MacGregor
Chief Executive



Introducing your new Board of Management

We would like to introduce ACHA's new Board of Management, who were elected at our Annual General Meeting in September.

Pictured in the front row, left to right, is Donnie MacMillan, Betty Rhodick, Cathy Grant, Sonja Aitken and Jim Milne. In the back row, from right to left is Cameron Grant, Brian Tester, Bruce Marshall and Pat McVey.



Are your household details up to date?

To ensure that your tenancy rights are protected it is very important that you advise us of any changes to your household.

This includes telling us about anyone who moves in or out of your property.

If you need to let us know about any changes to your household or if you are unsure if you have already told us about changes, please enquire by:

- Writing or calling into your local Housing offices;
- Calling our Customer Service Centre on **0800 028 2755**;
- Updating your tenancy information on our website at www.acha.co.uk. Click on the link "[View More Useful Information for tenants](#)" and from there you can submit your details on-line to us.

We will acknowledge receipt of your notification.



Our **Good Neighbour Award** recognises big hearted tenants in the community who go 'above and beyond' to help make life easier for others and this year's winner has certainly done that! The judging of this year's nominations was carried out by the Chairs of ACHA Area Committees and we are delighted to announce that **Judith Donaldson from the Isle of Mull is this year's Good Neighbour Award Winner and received £100 worth of high street vouchers!**

Mrs Donaldson saw black smoke coming from her neighbour's home when their boiler went on fire last year, she phoned the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and entered their property to save the animals without a thought for her own safety.

Well done Mrs Donaldson and thank you from ACHA and all your neighbours! Do you know an ACHA tenant who goes that extra mile for their neighbours? Nominations are now open for the 2020

Good Neighbour award—download a form from www.acha.co.uk or pick up one from any ACHA office. Let someone in your community know how much you appreciate them!



Congratulations to our **Garden in Bloom** winners this year, details of all winners are available on our [website](#).



Our 'Tallest Sunflower' competition winners can be found on page 11



Your Area Committee News

Bute & Cowal Area Committee

In September, the Bute & Cowal Area Committee held their first meeting since being reformed in the summer. The members considered a full agenda, including approving Community Action Fund applications, something that has not been done at a local level for a number of years.

The committee also welcomed Jim Milne, Chair of the Board of Management and Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive of the Association. The Chair addressed the meeting and expressed his thanks for the willing spirit shown by the new Committee members. The next meeting will be held on 27 November. If you are a member and wish to attend to see how our Committee works, please contact Garrick Collier at Garrick.collier@acha.co.uk or on 01546 605950 for details.



Pictured above are committee members—Cathy Grant, Pat McVey, Arthur Lowe, Joyce Lowe, Susan Stewart (ACHA), and Alastair MacGregor (ACHA).

Oban, Lorn & Isles Area Committee

By Ian McIntyre, Chair & tenant member of Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee — “Recently I attended a Board meeting in Dunoon and travelling through the glens with the low autumn sun shining through the trees with the mist coming off the water, reminded me of the stock tour I took, my first of the Oban, Lorn and Isles homes during the summer.

A mini bus was organised for the Area Committee and after boarding we went off to see what there was to see. One and a half Argyll properties, sheltered units, complexes, homes transferred from council stock, ex forestry homes set in remote woods, of all vintages.

It's easy to spot ACHA homes, they stand out amongst others, bright and fresh where refurbishment has taken place to bring up to the standard we now expect in our homes. The new builds, some small scale some larger.

Argyll is somewhere you measure distance in time not mileage, the demographic range of the population, transport infrastructure, all were highlighted on this wee ACHA Area Committee day trip and of course its beautiful countryside”.

If you would like to join ACHA's band of volunteers get in contact with Amanda MacKenzie at Amanda.mackenzie@acha.co.uk or contact 01546 605930.



Ian McIntyre (centre) pictured with fellow OLI Committee Members on tour, from left to right; Alistair Bonar, Mary MacAulay, Councillor Jim Lynch & Alister MacIntyre.

Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee

Members from Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee attended the Opening Ceremony of Castle Wood Court on the 23rd August. The opening celebrated the building of 32 new homes for the Helensburgh & Lomond area. It was a hugely successful day with Jackie Baillie MSP leading the ceremony.

Members of Helensburgh and Lomond's Area Committee are pictured surrounding the memorial bench in memory of Danny Kelly a great supporter of the new build development. The memorial bench is now sited in the Castle Wood Court play park.



Pictured above Sonja Aitken, Sandra Glaszsher, Cameron Grant, David Phillips and Bobby Beggs

40 Years at Lochgair Place

Members of the **Mid Argyll & Kintyre Area Committee** joined staff and sheltered housing residents at Lochgair Place to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of its opening by Malcolm Rifkind, Member of Parliament for Edinburgh Pentlands in October 1979. As part of the celebrations, a lovely afternoon tea was held in the Tarbert Hotel where many stories from the past were shared.



Betty Rhodick, Chairperson of the Mid Argyll & Kintyre Area Committee said, "It was so nice to meet the current residents of Lochgair Place and join in with the anniversary celebrations and everyone had a good time. Thanks to the Tarbert Hotel for their hospitality and all who made this a special day for all concerned"

To commemorate the anniversary, a plaque was unveiled by Betty Rhodick along with residents Sandra MacKenzie, also Vice Chairperson of the Mid Argyll & Kintyre Area Committee and Betty Rintoul, ACHA's longest residing tenant at the complex.



We currently have one tenant member vacancy. If you are a resident of the Mid Argyll & Kintyre area and would like to get involved in your local Area Committee, why not get in touch and find out more! Contact your local office on 01546 605800 (Lochgilphead) or 01546 605880 (Campbeltown).

Two-minute interview with Mary MacAulay

Committee Member with Oban, Lorn & Isles Area Committee

How did you find out about ACHA?

I saw an advert looking for tenant members for Area Committee, I applied and was accepted.

Why did you want to get involved?

I worked for Argyll & Bute Council for over 20 years and was an instructor and youth leader with the Red Cross for 30 years, so I enjoyed going to meetings and decision making and meeting lots of new people.

What's been the best bit so far?

I enjoy all the Area Committee meetings and getting involved with all the different discussions.

What has surprised you the most?

How much work ACHA staff do for the area and the amount of houses that are being built.

If someone was thinking about getting more involved, how would you encourage them?

Come to any open meetings or speak to a member of ACHA staff to find out how interesting and worthwhile it is being involved with ACHA's work.



Cardross Gala Day

Members of Cardross Tenants & Residents Association and staff from ACHA attended the Cardross Gala Day in May, this year to promote both their Association's activities.

Bad weather on the day did not dampen the attendance levels overall and those attending the event browsed through stalls provided by a number of organisations such as the local Church, Ardarden Garden centre, ACHA and Cardross Tenants and Residents Association, arts and crafts. Other activities included country dancing and face painting for the younger attendees.

Cardross Tenant and Resident Association member Bobby Beggs commented "**Members held their own stall promoting ACHA achievements and provided information on the activities of both organisations. We had a lovely display in our ACHA tent which included goodies for the kids and expert advice to our tenants from Acha staff. All had a good day despite the weather**"

In attendance at our tent, (pictured right to left), were ACHA staff member Seonaid Cameron, David Phillips (ACHA and Your Voice member), Bobby Beggs (ACHA and Your Voice member). Representing Cardross Tenants & Residents Association was Elspeth Daldry.



ACHA's Community Action could help you

Since April of this year, 23 registered charities in Argyll and Bute have benefitted from a Community Action Fund award for a number of varied and diverse initiatives. These awards have assisted groups working in our communities to make a difference. Some of the groups we have helped so far this year are;

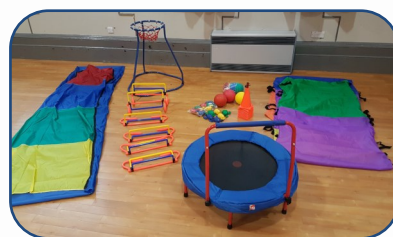
Dochas Carers Centre	£300	Port Ellen Toddlers	£300
The GRAB Trust	£500	Interloch Transport	£500
Patchwork 2-5 Nursery	£480	Fun First	£432.47
Shopper- Aide	£500	Tarbert Soup Group	£500
Tarbert Youth Group	£500	Kintyre Link Club	£375
Mid Argyll Pipe Band	£500	Garelochhead Station Trust	£465
MS Centre Mid Argyll	£500	Kilfinan Community Forest	£500
Mid Argyll Community Enterprises	£500	Loch Long Jetty Association	£500
Friends of Riverbank Hide Kilmun	£500		
Helensburgh & Lomond Highland Games	£500		

ACHA's Board of Management have increased the Community Action Fund budget this year, so this means we are able to help even more groups. The fund is open for applications from registered charities of up to £500 and application forms can be requested by telephoning 0800 028 2755, emailing achacustomerservicecentre@acha.co.uk or it can be downloaded from our website at www.acha.co.uk

Garelochhead Station Trust applied for an award to be able to take veterans and their families to a national Remembrance Day event.

Tarbert Youth Group used their funding to help operate their Sunday Fun day initiative which takes place every Sunday during the school term and involves activities for young people between the ages of 8 and 16.

Fun First Fitness an on-going project, which provides a weekly fitness session for children who are beginning to walk up to the age of 5, was awarded £432.47. The award was used to purchase new fitness equipment to replace their old and much worn equipment. Families who come to the weekly sessions were over joyed, and the children were so excited to try out the new equipment. The award will benefit them in developing key skills - for example Ball Skills and Gross Motor Skills as well as learning new and fun Games with an emphasis on developing physical fitness.



Coral Milne, Manager said "On behalf of everyone at Fun First Thank You so much for the award, the new equipment is going to make a great difference."

Kids Colouring Competition for ages 3 -11, colour in this festive scene for a chance to win a £20 high street voucher to spend in the January sales!! You need to be in it to win it ... colour in the insert to this newsletter, or download a copy from our [website](http://www.acha.co.uk) and send it to your local office.



Update on ACHA's 10 10 10 initiative

Seven schools in Argyll and Bute have been successful so far this year with their application to ACHA's 10 10 10 scheme. The legacy was set up to recognise the Association's 10th anniversary in 2017, when ACHA's Board agreed to invest £10,000 per year for 10 years in 10 schools in Argyll and Bute, and to work in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council to support young people in particular areas where there are clearly identified needs.

The successful schools are; St Andrew's Primary, Rothesay, Barcaldine Primary, Kilmodan Primary, Colintrave, Small Isles Primary, Isle of Jura, Tighnabruaich Primary, Sandbank Primary, Dunoon and Strachur Primary.

This year the grants to the schools will help to support a number of different projects and initiatives such as an outdoor laboratory project, a lending library, provision of a music space, design and play led workshops.

The 10 10 10 initiative is open to all local authority schools in Argyll and Bute and details of how to apply and application forms are issued early each year by Argyll and Bute Council. The closing date for applications each year is 31st May.

In 2017, **Achaleven Primary School** purchased a range of equipment to help their P5 children develop their digital literacy skills. The school applied to purchase Lego wedo, K'nex control and a small robot, called Sphero, that could be programmed using the iPad. Using this equipment enables the children to rotate between digital technology, following plans and designing their own models.



Lego wedo



Little Spheros at their charging stations,

You said ... we did

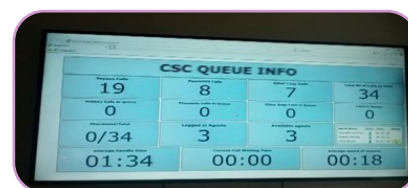
You said: In our surveys you said that you weren't happy with the appearance of your estates, in particular, the common areas and fencing.

We did: We have committed £300 000 to our Exemplar Estates programme to improve the external environment in areas where it is most needed.



Lochnell Street, Lochgilphead— before & after

You said: Our **Your Voice** tenants' scrutiny group said that we should develop a system which allows ACHA to accurately assess how long calls are waiting for, before they are answered.



We did: We introduced a new call management system which enables us to ensure that tenants receive the best service when they call our offices.

Rent Consultation

Our 2020/21 Rent Consultation was posted to all tenants on November 8th and provides information to help you understand how ACHA uses your money, what commitments we have in our business plan, a comparison of ACHA rents and tenant satisfaction, information on affordability and value for money, and the proposed rent charges for 2020/21.

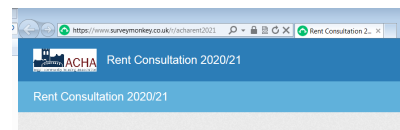
Our online survey can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/acharent2021> This is a quick and easy way of responding. Alternatively you can complete the hard copy of the form and email this to

rentconsultation@acha.co.uk, hand it in to your local area office,

or post direct to :

Director of Finance and IT, Argyll Community Housing Association, Dalriada House, Lochgilphead PA31 8JL.

If you have not received your document this can be downloaded from <https://www.acha.co.uk/news-rent-consultation/> or email rentconsultation@acha.co.uk and a copy will be send in the post.



Direct Debit



Congratulations to Mr Hegarty from Berryburn in Kames, who has won £100 in High Street vouchers, and said “I didn’t even know I was in a prize draw so I am delighted to have won. I would certainly recommend that other tenants pay by Direct Debit”.

All tenants who pay by direct debit are entered into our annual prize draw, if you would like to have a chance to win £100 of High Street vouchers, contact your local office.

Performance Matters

Every year we report on our performance to the Scottish Housing Regulator, who also produces their own report which compares our performance to other Registered Social Landlords. This report is available on the Regulator’s website at www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

Our 2018/19 Landlord report, is available to download from our website <https://www.acha.co.uk/news-landlord-report/>.



Your feedback is important to us and helps us to improve our service, we welcome your views on the information we have provided in our report – if you wish to comment please email us at communications@acha.co.uk.

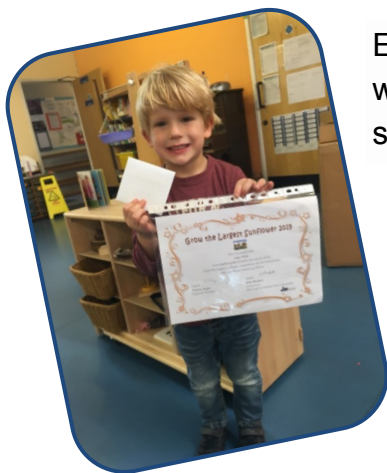




Tallest Sunflower competition

Congratulations to all our winners in our

Arrochar Primary Pre-5 unit won in Helensburgh and Lomond with their 183 cm high sunflower.



Euan Miller, from Southend Pre-5 unit won in Kintyre with his 115cm high sunflower.

Archie Welch, from Badden Farm Nursery won in Mid Argyll with his 172cm high sunflower. Archie is pictured with his Grandma Karen, sister Millie and Rachael MacIndeor from ACHA.



Here to Help You.

One definition of the word welfare is “help given to those who need it”. Often our tenants struggle making ends meet when they could be eligible for benefits they are unaware of.

This is when our Welfare Rights service can provide help for those who need it. A free and confidential service for our tenants, our Welfare Rights Officers are trained in all areas of the benefits system, from Attendance Allowance to Tax Credits. Since 2016 we have found well over £5 million for our tenants, many of whom had no idea they were entitled to more money.

The benefits system can be complicated and daunting but you don't have to face it by yourself, help is available from ACHA's Welfare Rights service. Telephone **0800 028 2755** or call in to your local office to arrange an appointment. More information is also available at www.acha.co.uk.



Email address Prize Draw



Would you like to win £100 of vouchers? If you've not already done so, register your email address with us and we will enter you into our annual email address prize draw. To register contact your local office (as per details on the back page).

This year's winner, Mr E MacNeill from Ardrishaig, Mid Argyll said “I'm delighted to be the winner of this year's email address competition”.



Our Commitment

Argyll Community Housing Association is committed to providing equal opportunities across all services and to avoid discrimination.

If you would like this report in larger print, an alternative language, on audio format or in paper or electronic format, or if you would like someone to read it or explain it to you please contact Corporate Services on 01546 605855, or email us at communications@acha.co.uk.



ACHA's Christmas and New Year office opening hours

This year our offices will be closed from 2pm on Tuesday 24th December until 9am on Monday 30th December 2019. Our offices will close again at 2pm on Tuesday 31st December and re-open 9am on Friday 3rd January 2020.

Best Wishes for 2020

**Seasons greetings and a peaceful and prosperous New Year from
ACHA's Board of Management and Staff**



If you wish to report an emergency repair, please contact **0800 028 2755**.

Bute

Haig House, 13-16 Longhill Crescent, Rothesay, Bute, PA20 0JT,
telephone 01546 605870, e-mail: housing.bute@acha.co.uk

Cowal

Dolphin Hall, Manse Ave, Dunoon PA23 8DQ, telephone 01546 605950,
e-mail: housing.cowal@acha.co.uk

Helensburgh & Lomond

Lamont House, 9-19 Stuckleckie Road, Helensburgh, G84 7NL, telephone 01546 605920,
e-mail: housing.lomond@acha.co.uk

Islay

11 Flora Street, Bowmore, PA43 7JX, telephone 01546 605890,
e-mail: housing.islay@acha.co.uk

Kintyre

Old Quay Head, Campbeltown PA28 6ED, telephone 01546
605880, e-mail: housing.kintyre@acha.co.uk

Mid Argyll

Dalriada House, Lochgilphead PA31 8JL, telephone 01546 605800
e-mail: housing.midargyll@acha.co.uk

Oban, Lorn and Isles

Menzies House, Glenshellach Business Park, Oban PA34 4RY,
telephone 01546 605930, e-mail: housing.lorn@acha.co.uk



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