



Gypsy/Travellers Newsletter

The Tinkers Heart



The Tinkers Heart in Argyll, Scotland, is an ancient monument dating back to the 1700s. For centuries, the Tinkers Heart was a Wedding Place where the Gypsy/Travelling people of Scotland would go to get married and have their babies blessed at the Lochgoilhead cross roads, looking out over loch Fyne. Weddings were still taking place there until the late 1970s. The Heart (pictured above) is made from quartz stones set into the ground, an ancient tradition for remembering lost relatives in Scotland.

Historic Scotland initially rejected monument status but reconsidered after campaigners lead by author Jess Smith were backed by MSPs on Holyrood's Public Petitions Committee.

Michael Russell MSP said "I learnt a huge amount from Jess Smith and other travellers as I worked with them to secure a listing for the Tinkers Heart, which means it is recognised as being a place of national importance. That also means that Scotland has at last started to acknowledge the contribution to our shared culture and country made by the travelling community over many centuries. We have much to thank travellers for and I for one want to see this place much better known and much better presented to visitors, so the job is not finished yet "

Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive

Welcome to our 4th Annual Gypsy/Traveller Newsletter. You may remember that this newsletter was originally produced in 2015 because our Gypsy/Traveller tenants told us they wanted a dedicated newsletter. I'm delighted that this year in our annual survey our tenants told us that they were pleased with the newsletter. Our survey of satisfaction also told us that this year, for the first time, 100% of respondents were satisfied with ACHA's management of their site. This is great news and we want to continue to improve. I'm also pleased to see an improvement in tenants' satisfaction with the repairs service

ACHA is providing. In terms of comparison to the national average, our rent continues to be at the lower end of costs, meaning that we are offering an affordable rent for Gypsy/Traveller tenants in Argyll. Finally, I'd like to extend an invite to all our Gypsy/Traveller tenants to attend our Annual Tenants and Members conference in Inveraray on 16th February 2019, further details are contained in the newsletter, and we can help you with travel and childcare arrangements – I hope to see you there.



Tenants & Members Conference 2019

ACHA is holding its second Tenants and Members conference on the 16th February 2019 in Inveraray. As always, our Gypsy/Traveller tenants have been invited, and we hope to see there. To book please visit www.acha.co.uk or contact Gina Gordon on 01546 605837 for more information. We can help with transport and childcare if necessary, let us know what you need to help you attend.

Welfare Rights Service



Are you sure you are getting all the money you are entitled to? Many people miss out on benefits they are entitled to from the government by not making claims. If you would like a benefit check to make sure you are receiving everything you are entitled to please contact our Welfare Rights service. They can help you apply for benefits, appeal decisions, and advise and assist with Universal Credit claims. Universal Credit is a new benefit replacing Income based Job Seekers Allowance, Income Related Employment Support Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit & Child Tax Credit.

So whether you are of working age or have retired, our Welfare Rights Officers are available and ready to help. Monthly surgeries are carried out at the Gypsy Traveller Sites and you can also contact the Welfare Rights Officers by contacting your local ACHA office or calling **0800 028 2755** if you wish any advice or assistance. Our Gypsy/Traveller Welfare Rights surgeries are funded by the Scottish Government's People & Communities Fund.



Site Upgrade Works

The Association completed all the Duncholgan & Ledaig site upgrade works prior to the Scottish Government deadline of June 2018. A part of these works included installing pitch gates, for those who requested it, which has provided an extra security measure for our site tenants.



Pictured left is Ledaig before and right is Ledaig after the installation of pitch gates



Following consultation with the tenants in Duncholgan and Ledaig, the Association has agreed to go above and beyond the Scottish Government Site Standards by installing a play park in each site. Further information will be provided by ACHA representatives in due course.



Road Improvement Duncholgan

In July 2018 works were completed to improve the road to Duncholgan. These works included the provision of 2 new passing places and repair of the road surface where required.

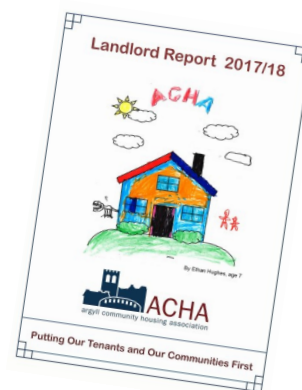
What Would You Like To See In This Newsletter?

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. If you have any comment or suggestions for future newsletters please get in touch – **we'd love to hear from you!**

This newsletter can be made available in other formats, for example in large print, audio-format or Braille: the document may also be available in other languages, in full or summary form, as appropriate. Contact: **0800 028 2755**

Performance Matters

At the end of October we published our annual “Landlord Report” which provides details of satisfaction levels and performance on a wide range of our services. We report all of the information in the Report each year to the Scottish Housing Regulator. <https://www.acha.co.uk/news-landlord-report/>



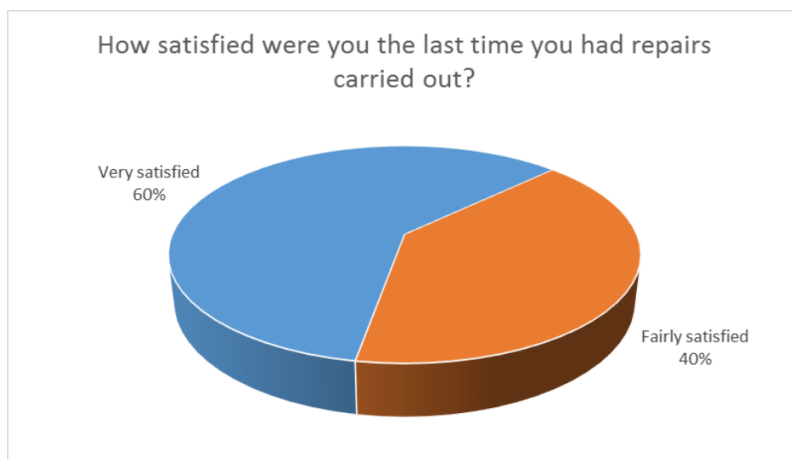
We were pleased to see an increase in our Gypsy/Traveller tenants satisfaction results. 100% of respondents told us that they were satisfied with ACHA’s management of their site. This is an increase from last year, where 92% of respondents were satisfied. It is also better than the national average of 80%.

We also reported on the Value for Money of our weekly rent per pitch. ACHA’s average weekly pitch rent was £48.14 in 2017-2018 which compares favourably with the national average of £67.38.

What Do You Think of ACHA?

The annual Gypsy/Traveller survey was carried out in February 2018. As in 2017, the number of families responding totalled 12 this year which is 75% of our Gypsy/Traveller tenants. The full results of the survey are available at <https://www.acha.co.uk/services-gypsy-traveller/>.

We are pleased with the feedback regarding repairs. 100% of respondents told us they were fairly satisfied or very satisfied the last time they had repairs carried out by ACHA. The 2017 figure was 84%, so this represents a 16% increase in satisfaction figures.



During 2017-2018 we carried out 100 reactive repairs at Gypsy/Traveller sites. 11 of these repairs were out of the target time.

27 repairs were also carried out to vacant pitches.

All the respondents also told us that they were fairly satisfied or very satisfied with this newsletter which is great news! We want to continue to develop the newsletter so if you have any articles you wish included or wish to contribute please let us know.

Visit: www.acha.co.uk or Call 0800 028 2755

Name Change for Gypsy/Traveller Site

Recently ACHA responded to tenant's requests to change the name at the Association's Gypsy/Traveller Site at Ledaig.

As a result, ACHA consulted with tenants at Ledaig and Duncholgan Gypsy/Travellers Sites during June and July this year, asking if they would like to change the name of the site and if so, what they would like the name changed to.



Duncholgan tenants chose to keep their site name.

Tenants at Ledaig requested a new site name and their suggestion was approved by ACHA's Board. The proposed new name has now been passed to Argyll & Bute Council for their approval and ACHA will update tenants as soon as we have been advised of the outcome.

Smoke Alarm Could Save Your Home, and Your Life



Looking after your smoke alarm

Never- Take the batteries out, even for a short time

Paint over or put stickers on the smoke alarm

Every week- Test your smoke alarm by pressing the 'test' button. If it doesn't sound, fit a new battery. If it still doesn't sound, fit a new alarm

Every year- Replace the battery (unless you have a special 'long-life' alarm with a built in battery). Choose a date you'll remember easily to do this, like a birthday or anniversary

Keep it clean and dust free. Gently vacuum the inside and outside casing. If you're decorating or doing something that creates a lot of dust, use an elastic band to secure a plastic bag over the smoke alarm casing – don't forget to take it off when you're done

Every ten years- Replace each smoke alarm. The material inside smoke alarms that makes them work gets tired as it gets old.

To help you stay safe ACHA have installed heat or smoke detectors in the pitch amenity units and we would encourage you to test them regularly.

Additionally Scottish Fire and Rescue Service can carry out a fire safety visit to your pitch to offer some practical advice.

If you need an extra detector in your caravan they can provide one free of charge.





Recycling News

Argyll and Bute Council only collect general waste every 3 weeks, therefore it is very important to recycle, it saves space for household waste.

Here is a guide what you can recycle:



BLUE BINS

PAPER – Envelopes, Paper food packaging, Magazines, Newspapers, Brochures, Catalogues, Leaflets

PLASTIC – Plastic lids, Food trays, Hand wash bottles, Drink bottles, Milk bottles, Shampoo bottles, Sauce bottles, Yoghurt pots

CARDBOARD – Cereal boxes, Cardboard packaging, Brown corrugated boxes, Toilet roll tubes, Soup/Juice and Milk Cartons, Egg boxes

METAL – Drinks cans, Food tins, empty aerosol cans, Aluminium, Metal lids

GREEN BINS

All other household waste



PLEASE NOTE ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL WILL NOT EMPTY BLUE BINS WITH CONTAMINATED WASTE IN THEM, YOU WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE EMPTYING THESE BINS.

What Do You Think?

ACHA wants to hear from you if have a suggestion, compliment or complaint. We'd much rather that you told us why you aren't happy with our service and give us the opportunity to make things better.

Please Download our Customer Information leaflet at www.acha.co.uk/Services/complaints.html for further information on how we deal with any comments or complaints you have about us .

This year our offices will be closed from 2pm on Monday 24th December and open again at 9am on Thursday 27th December. We will be closed again from 2pm on Monday 31st December until 9am on Thursday 3rd January 2018.

If you have an emergency repair or urgent enquiry telephone:

0800 028 2755

ACHA's Board of Management and staff would like to wish you the best for the festive season and a prosperous New Year.

