

## HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND AREA COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF MEETING

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012 @ 11am

in the Howie Pavillion Rosneath

#### Present:

Michael Brown (MB) - Tenant  
 Sandra Glazsher (SG) - Tenant  
 Stephen Allcroft (SAL) - Tenant  
 Councillor Kelly (CK) – Council Representative

#### Staff Members Present:

Christine Johnston (CJ)  
 Yvonne Litster (YL)  
 Wendy Nicholson (WN)

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| 1. | <b>Apologies:</b><br>Joan Roy (JR)<br>Bill McIntyre (BM)<br>Sonja Aitken (SA)<br>Maisie Dunlay (MD)<br><br>Post Meeting Note:<br>George Douglas (GD)<br><br>Area Committee members started the meeting by expressing their sadness at the loss of Councillor Al Reay.   | Action |
| 2. | <b>Minutes of Previous Meeting: 13<sup>th</sup> January 2012</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Page 2: YL advised update of Darlieth Road Garages "ACHA accepted indemnities from Argyll &amp; Bute Council" should read ACHA accepted warranties and indemnities from Argyll &amp; Bute Council.</li> <li>Page 2 Line 12 YL advised "did not own the land on which they were sited" should be removed and replaced with "where title was unclear"</li> <li>Page 10: MB advised he wished his objection noted to the removal of cash collection from the Area Offices.</li> <li>Page 11: SA advised that Q: MB asked, due to the current climate .... should read SA asked, .....</li> <li>Page 11: YL advised "2012/2013" should be replaced with "2011/2012".</li> </ul> |        |

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|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Page 11 Para 3: YL advised “mechanisms will be agreed by the Board ..” will be replaced with “proposals will be agreed by the Board...”</li> <li>Page 12 Para 5: YL advised “won the tender” should read “won the EU tender”.</li> </ul> <p>Proposed: Stephen Allcroft (SAL) Seconded: Mike Brown (MB)</p>  |  |
| 3. | <p><b>Matters Arising from Previous Minutes: 13.01.12</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Item 13 SA asked for an update on the land disposal query at Maitland Court.<br/>MB responded that the Board had agreed to the proposal at Maitland Court and that the query be split into two as requested by the Area Committee.</li> </ul> <p>Running order was changed to allow CK to leave the meeting early. Members went onto to discuss Agenda Item 12 then returned to normal proceedings.<br/>SG advised that she was approached by a tenant regarding the new door installation, and queried why he was getting a new door when his was only 4 years old. YL advised SG that as this related to an individual tenant she would deal with the matter outwith the meeting.</p>   |  |
| 4. | <p><b>Conflicts of Interest to Declare</b></p> <p>No conflicts of interest were declared by members.</p>   |  |
| 5. | <p><b>Correspondence:</b></p> <p>No correspondence received</p>  |  |
| 6. | <p><b>Board of Management Update presented by MB</b></p> <p>Board Minutes 15.12.11 and 12.01.12 previously circulated:</p> <p><b>Budget 2012/13</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Budget for 2012/13 was approved</li> <li>Welfare Rights Service – funding approved for a further year (up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013). Other funding streams to support this project continue to be explored. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ CJ advised that ACHA tenants only, at this point, were being offered the Welfare Rights Service, although an approach had been received from West Highland. The Committee will be kept updated after considerations have been made.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Pay Increase – HRCS are consulting with staff on the proposed 2% pay increase. To be brought back to March Board of Management for decision.</li> </ul> <p><b>Rent Increase 2012/13</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rent Increase Approved – RPI + 1% = <b>5.8% increase for 2012/13</b>. This equates to £3.58 weekly increase.</li> </ul> |  |

It was noted that even with this increase, ACHA still had the lowest rents in the Argyll & Bute area compared to other RSL partners.

Board Member have asked for a press release to be issued prior to rent increase letters being issued to tenants, which states why the rent has been increased.

### **Chief Executive Update**

- Positive response received from Argyll & Bute Council's Chief Executive on the public works loan board request (This is a proposed strategic initiative involving all RSL's in Argyll & Bute)
- Rural Housing Development Fund – An application has been submitted to the Council for a site at Ledumas Place, Port Ellen.
- SHR Improvement Plan – The final plan will be ready for Board consideration at the March meeting (ACHA had 88 outcomes to achieve).
- Pressurised Area Designation (PAD) now in place. ACHA received a late influx of applications for Right to Buy towards the end of the deadline.
- Head of Business Repairs Development – interviews are being held on 17<sup>th</sup> February.
  - CJ confirmed that John Forbes has accepted the above post and is expected to start work in the Oban office on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

Councillor Kelly left the meeting at this point (11:25 am)

- New Builds – On site in Campbeltown, Dunoon and Lochgoilhead. Lochgoilhead due to be complete end March.
- Staff Road shows are nearing completion.
- Chief Executive Tenant Visits – visits to Bonawe, Port Ellen, Taynuilt and Dalmally have taken place
- Scottish Governments Spring Budget Revision:
  - Ministers have allocated an additional £33million for investment in the current financial year
  - £10million for affordable housing supply
  - £2million for housing adaptations
  - £0.9million for housing related regeneration programmes

Clarification is being sought from Scottish Government Officials as to where the resources will go.

At the Stage 3 of the budget debate on 8<sup>th</sup> February it was announced that £80million is to be reinstated for affordable housing in the next 3 years programmes.

This is still £40million cut over the 3 years, but better than was originally proposed.

- The Scottish Government has issued a Consultation paper on Affordable Rented Housing (how Registered Social Landlords allocate properties)
- A meeting has taken place with British Gas regarding concerns with progress with the heating & rewire programme.

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|    | <p>A catch up programme has now commenced. Letters are being issued to tenants to update them on timescales</p> <p><b>Factoring Strategy – Interim Report (attached)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members approved the Factoring Strategy which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sets a target of a minimum 300 personal approaches to potential customers per annum</li> <li>Will sets a target for “sign ups” to the Factoring service within 6 months</li> <li>Agrees to a strategy to bring the factoring service into a cost neutral position by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.</li> </ul> </li> <li>A further report on progress will be submitted to the Board in 6 months time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Subsidiary Development (attached)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Subsidiary has been named “Argyll Homes For All”.</li> <li>The new Committee will comprise of 5 members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 existing members from the Board of Management</li> <li>2 Independent Members (not already on the Board, and could include Senior Staff)</li> <li>Secretary</li> </ul> </li> <li>Councillor McCuish agreed to be Secretary. Board members who are interested in sitting on this Committee are to let HRCS know.</li> </ul> <p>Q: MB asked if the positions were not filled would there be an option for Area Committee members to consider standing.<br/>A: YL advised that the matter would be looked into.</p> <p><b>Land Disposal Request – Maitland Court, Helensburgh (attached)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved</li> </ul> <p><b>Area Committee Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed that updates from the Area Chairs will now be placed in the Board Information pack</li> </ul> <p><b>A.O.C.B.</b><br/>L Haig briefed members on a development opportunity at the former Rockfield Primary School, Oban. Discussions with Argyll &amp; Bute Council are taking place.</p> | YL/WN |
| 7. | <p><b>Regional Managers Report – presented by YL</b></p> <p><b>Investment and Regeneration</b></p> <p><b>Kitchen &amp; Bathroom (Carillion)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bathroom Installs have commenced – where special needs identified</li> <li>Contractor committed to having all programmed bathroom work complete by end May. Still awaiting the programme for the kitchen installation</li> </ul>   |       |

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| <p><b>Window &amp; Doors (Sidey)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Door Contract has now commenced</li> <li>• Due to be complete over a 3 week period</li> </ul> <p><b>Heating &amp; Rewire (Carillion)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works ongoing</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Roofing &amp; Roughcasting (Morrison Spottiswood)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Contract yet to start</u></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Security Doors</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Awaiting updated list for new programme of installs</u></li> </ul> <p><b>Garage Lock Up Strategy</b></p> <p><b>Lockups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Darlieth Road – Ownership issues still to be resolved</li> <li>• General – Aim is to conclude all works by end Financial Year</li> </ul> <p>YL advised that pressure was being put on Argyll and Bute Council from our Solicitors to try and resolve ownership as quickly as possible.</p> <p>SA commented that it would appear that the lock up`s in question are now being used illegally with the possibility that they are being used as storage and that a speedy resolution is now required.</p> <p>YL will investigate the matter and report back to members.</p> <p>YL further advised that in terms of the garage strategy for Lomond, the aim is to conclude all works by the end of the financial year but there will likely remain the odd demolition, refurbishment or sale to be completed during 2012. The sale of garages are proceeding, with 4 completed recently.</p> <p><b>Play Parks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mill Park, Cardross – additional equipment has now been installed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Press Releases</b></p> <p>A selection of press articles were highlighted over the previous two months. Included in this report were articles on:</p> <p>Residents at Drumfork Court accuse ACHA of letting their area become a dumping ground.</p> <p>YL clarified that containers are used by Carillion our Contractors for storage during the extensive programme carried out to renew kitchens/bathrooms and that the containers will remain until the improvement works are complete.</p> | <p>YL</p> |
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| <p>Fire at our flatted property in Williamson Drive Helensburgh.</p> <p>YL advised that all works were now complete after fire damage and that the Area Team were working with the family concerned.</p> <p>ACHA also took out adverts for the Community Action Fund and Independent Board Vacancies.</p> <p>Pressurised Area Designation was also published by the Advertiser and ACHA's New Payment Arrangements.</p> <p>MB requested that information on Press Releases be issued as part of the Area Committee packs. WN will ensure this is carried out from now on.</p> <p><b>Housing Management &amp; Maintenance</b></p> <p><b>Rent Increase</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board of Management approved the Rent Increase for 2012/13 – 5.8%.</li> <li>• Garage Sites, Lockups, Service Charges and Factoring Fee also increased at same rate</li> <li>• Letters have been issued to all affected</li> </ul> <p><b>Household Questionnaire –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legally required to contact tenants annually regarding household occupancy</li> <li>• All tenants asked to confirm how they would like to be communicated.</li> </ul> <p>MB clarified that any email address supplied would not be passed onto any other organisation and was for Association use only.</p> <p><b>Welfare Rights Service –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board approved funding for 2012/13</li> <li>• Likely to only continue for ACHA tenants</li> </ul> <p><b>Factoring Strategy –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved by Board 9<sup>th</sup> February.</li> <li>• Aim to target around 400 owners this year to gauge interest in ACHA's Factoring Service</li> </ul> <p>Q: SA asked what the aim for the coming year is for the Factoring Service.</p> <p>A: CJ confirmed that as Area Teams will no longer be responsible for cash receipting payments from the 31.03.12. Staff will be concentrating, in the Lomond area, with the factoring service to establish if this is what owners actually want from the Association. Face to face contact is the favoured method of contact with the aim being to have a viable factoring service by next financial year.</p> <p>MB wished to confirm that the Factoring Service cannot be made</p> | <p>WN</p> |
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compulsory to owners of previous Local Authority properties.

### **Scottish Government Consultation**

- Affordable Rented Housing –
- Proposals to change the way affordable rented housing is allocated and managed.

The Scottish Government have issued proposals to change the way affordable rented housing is allocated and managed. Various consultation events are being held and there is one in Inveraray on Tuesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> 2012.

YL requested that any interested members please let her know at the end of the meeting.

### **End of Cash Receipting:**

- From here on in a poster will be displayed showing countdown to the end of cash receipting, the colour of paper will change to help alert tenants to countdown.
- For each tenant who visits to pay rent staff will advise them when cash collection will end, and discuss alternative payment methods eg. direct debit, ACHA's Payment Card and phone payments.
- Tenants will be offered a rent record card which they can use to keep a record of any payments that they make.
- Any tenant who appears to be confused or anxious about using their ACHA payment card at a local outlet will be offered the opportunity to have an ACHA member of staff accompany them to help them initially.
- The website is also being updated with this information.

Q: MB asked how tenants would be receiving balances on accounts.

A: CJ advised that tenants can contact the 0800 number or their local office at any time, they will be required to answer certain security questions then balances can be supplied. Other forms of communicating this information are in the early stages of development for example weekly text messages.

CJ also updated members that income from the ACHA payment card (Paypoint) was now in excess of £1 million which highlights the popularity of the scheme.

### **Payment Collection:**

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|     | <p>YL advised that during the month of January we had a total of 1849 transactions made through the Payment Card, which totalled an income of £115,303.60 – this is an increase from December's figures which were 1728 transactions with an income of £106,312.00</p> <p>We also took a total of 72 transactions over the month of January from telephone payments at a value of £12,121.29 which in monetary value is steadily increasing from December's figure of just over £10,000.</p>   |  |
| 8.  | <p><b>Tenants Panel Minutes</b></p> <p>Minutes 15.11.11 and 17.01.12 previously circulated</p> <p>No comments by members</p>   |  |
| 9.  | <p><b>Health and Safety Minutes –</b></p> <p>Minutes 16.11.11 previously circulated</p> <p>No comments by members.</p>   |  |
| 10. | <p><b>Key Performance Indicators</b></p> <p>Targets met by the Lomond Area Team:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Void Relet Times (Stock Low Demand) – Target 49 days – <b>January 0 days</b></li> <li>2. Current Tenant Arrears – Target 2.50% - <b>January 2.50%</b></li> <li>3. Repairs Emergency –Target 100% - <b>January 100%</b></li> <li>4. Repairs Urgent – Target 96% - <b>January 99.1%</b></li> <li>5. Repairs Routine – Target 96% - <b>January 97.2%</b></li> <li>6. Qualifying Repairs – Target 100% - <b>January 100%</b></li> <li>7. Repairs Satisfaction – Target 95% - <b>January 100%</b> (56 satisfied)</li> </ol> <p>Targets partially met by the Lomond Area Team:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Void Relet Times (Not Low Demand) – Target 31 days – <b>January 32 days</b></li> <li>2. Void Repairs – Target 100% - <b>January 96.9%</b> (1 out of target)</li> <li>3. Post Inspections – Target 20% - <b>January 9%</b></li> </ol> <p>YL explained that there was a low turnover of properties during January, and 2 of the properties were in extremely poor condition when the keys were returned. This is reflected in the figures.</p> <p>Annual Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocation to Homelessness – Target 50% - <b>January 67%</b> (2 lets)</li> <li>• *Allocation to Waiting List – Target 25% - <b>January 0%</b> (0 lets)</li> </ul> |  |



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|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• *Allocation to Transfer List – Target 25% - <b>January</b> 33% (1 lets)</li> </ul> <p>YL advised that the Lomond KPI's were not too badly affected by recent work incurred during the storms and that performance remains good.</p>   |  |
| 11 | <p><b>Estate Management Action Plan: Budget Update</b></p> <p>Budget expenditure details were previously circulated to members.</p> <p>Q: MB asked if there were any projects that could be agreed and finalised prior to the end of the Financial year.</p> <p>A: YL advised that there were no such projects, and as the money originates from the Repairs and Maintenance budget, any under spend would be transferred back to that budget.</p> <p>YL advised that a full update of all EMAPs finalised over this financial year will be presented to members at our meeting on the 03.05.12. YL also confirmed that she would be in a position to advise members what the budget for 2012/13 would be.</p>   |  |
| 12 | <p><b>Garden in Bloom – Proposals for 2012</b></p> <p>YL put forward the following points for consideration by the Committee taken from the paper previously circulated to members.</p> <p><b>Existing: Best Garden:</b> Engraved Vase for winner. Prize money of £50 (1st place), £30 (2nd place) and £20 (3rd place)</p> <p><b>Amended: Largest Sunflower:</b> Open to all pre 5 Nurseries (Age group 3-5 years old). Sunflower seeds will be supplied to Nurseries who wish to participate. Vouchers for books to the value of £35 to be donated to the winning nursery and £15 to the successful child.</p> <p><b>NEW: One off donation</b> of Trophy and annual Prize money for a local agricultural or horticultural show: Prize money of £15 (1st place), £10 (2nd place) and £5 (3rd place)</p> <p><b>NEW: Best Container</b> (to include window box, hanging basket, container): Engraved Vase for winner. Prize money of £50 (1st place), £30 (2nd place) and £20 (3rd place)</p> <p><b>NEW: One off Projects as Identified:</b> There may be potential areas of land within the Helensburgh &amp; Lomond area that could be developed into community garden areas. A competition could be aimed at primary school children, asking that they draw their</p> |  |

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|    | <p>idea of how the community garden should look.</p> <p>SA commented that he agreed with all of the above.</p> <p>Q: MB asked YL to clarify the “one off donation of Trophy”<br/>A: YL provided an example where an Area Committee sponsor both an Agricultural and Horticultural show by providing a one off Trophy and annual prize money,.</p> <p>MB asked that prior to agreement it was established how many Gala Days/Events there were likely to be. YL/WN to investigate.</p> <p>Members unanimously agreed to all other additions and amendments to the Garden Competition.</p>   | YL/WN |
| 13 | <p><b>FISH – Welfare Rights Project – Update</b></p> <p>Previously circulated to members for information</p> <p>YL highlighted the following from the document.</p> <p>Of the 1,365 ACHA tenants we have worked with, 615 were referred by ACHA staff either because of rent arrears or because there was a perceived need for a benefit check, spotted by staff. Total clients/financial gains by ACHA area offices have been reasonably consistent throughout the life of the project.</p>   |       |
| 14 | <p><b>FISH – Debt Advice Pilot Project - Update</b></p> <p>Previously circulated to members for information</p> <p>YL highlighted the following from the document.</p> <p>From 1<sup>st</sup> April to 10<sup>th</sup> February 2012 the bureau received <b>115 referrals</b> to the pilot project. These referrals came from FISH Welfare Rights officers and ACHA staff. Not all tenants chose to take up advice and/or assistance and 4 tenants had issues which were not debt related; these tenants were advised on an HB overpayment which was found to be non-recoverable; pensions, bank arrestment and a referral to the Money Advice Service</p> <p>There were <b>77 tenants</b> who did engage with the project resulting in 219 contacts, 196 in CAB office and 23 at outreach, raising 375 issues:<br/>CJ advised members that this pilot project would cease from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012.</p> |       |
| 15 | <p><b>A.O.C.B.</b></p> <p>Q: SG asked if issuing of payment record cards was taking away any cost effectiveness of not issuing new rent cards.<br/>A: WN advised that it was an A4 photocopied piece of paper and cost was minimal and that tenants in Lomond were giving good feedback on this as a way of recording payments.</p>  |       |

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|  | <p>Q: SA asked why his email address, which he supplied to the Association, was not used as a means of contact for tenant consultation purposes. SA found himself in a position where he could not attend a training workshop as he had not received confirmation of attendance. He had asked if an email would have been appropriate just as a reminder.</p> <p>A: CJ advised that email addresses could not be used as a means of all contact and can only be used under certain circumstances but would investigate the workshop training issue.</p> <p>Q: MB asked members if they had any proposals/suggestions that they wished him to take forward at the forthcoming Area Committee Chairs Meeting. This would be in relation to the future development of the Area Committee`s and the way forward.</p> <p>Discussion of members ensued with the following points being raised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area Committee`s could be utilised more in the decision making process, this would also alleviate the Agenda items for the Board.</li> <li>• Area Committee`s should be feeding local knowledge to the Board from the ground upwards.</li> <li>• Community Action Funds could possibly be agreed by members.</li> <li>• Check current governance rules to ascertain if meetings could be made public and advertised in advance in local offices.</li> <li>• Could the Policy Sub Committee be taken on by Area Committee`s?</li> <li>• Other Departments/Directors be asked to attend meetings and update members of their aims/objectives for the coming year.</li> <li>○ CJ suggested that members may be interested in the recent workshops that were delivered at the Strategic Planning days. She gave an example of the one held on the Scottish Housing Charter.</li> <li>○ CJ also advised that the new Estate Management Policy is going to propose a 7 year programme for estates, which the committee`s will be involved in and will see a pro active approach to modernising our Estates.</li> </ul> | CJ |
|  | <p><b>Date and Time of next Meeting</b></p> <p>Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012 Tenants and Residents Flat 1 Kirkton Road Cardross @ 11am</p>  |    |