



OBAN, LORN & THE ISLES AREA COMMITTEE

**Monday 5th March 2012
3pm
Menzie's House, Oban,**

Present

Mr George MacIntyre **Chair** (GF)
Mr Alister MacIntyre **Vice Chair** (AMI)
Mrs Lorraine Anne Drysdale (LD)
Mrs Marri Malloy (MM)
Mrs Mary MacAuley (MMA)
Mr Irvine Waugh (IW)
Mr Andy Birnie (AB)
Councillor Roddy McCuish (RMC)
Iona MacPhail, Regional Manager (IMP)
Collette Benham – Director Human Resources & Corporate Services (CB)
Amanda MacKenzie – Area Administration Officer (AMK)

1.	Apologies Janet MacIntosh.	Action
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting 9th January 2012 Were approved as an accurate record. Item 8. IMP advised the repairs satisfaction issues have now been resolved and as members will see the figures have vastly improved. Proposed - MM Seconded -MMA Matters Arising – None	
3.	Declarations of Interest	

	No conflict of interest	
4.	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>No correspondence.</p> <p>Alastair MacGregor joined the meeting to present Iona MacPhail with this year's Employee of the Year Award. Alastair advised that Iona and colleague Yvonne Litster have been jointly awarded the accolade, and informed Members present of Iona's achievements over the previous year, including the very successful implementation of ACHA Payment Cards (Allpay system). Alastair commented that the award is very well deserved and justified and thanked Iona for her continuing hard work.</p>	
5.	<p>Chairs Report</p> <p>Board Update 12th January 2012</p> <p>The Chief Executive gave a presentation which covered the following points:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Association's Crisis Management Team dealt with three major storm related incidents over a 4 week period during December and early January. Particular issues of concern relate to loss of power for prolonged periods particularly on Bute and Islay. Local staff responded proactively due to the ongoing situations. • Since it was announced that Pressured Area Designation had been approved (effective 31 Jan) a small increase in enquiries relating to Right to Buy have been received. • Work is ongoing in relation to the 2012/13 draft budget which will be discussed by Finance and Audit Committee on 30th January. • Officers currently finalising any outstanding issues from the Scottish Housing Regulator's Improvement plan for March 2012. • Sheltered housing upgrades for lifts and fire alarms progressing well. • Current tenant arrears levels and void turnaround times are best they have ever been. • The Scottish parliament has voted against the Westminster Government's welfare reform proposals- we await to see outcome. <p><u>OTHER ISSUES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each director provided a report detailing Key Performance 	

Information for their Departments.

- Approval given to the Director of Investment & Regeneration to restructure department to bring some services in house rather than use external consultants.
- The Board agreed that the new development at Park Square, Campbeltown should be named by the council who have final say on street names anyway.
- The Board were presented with an interim paper regarding potential issues with FISH funding. No decision was required at this meeting and a further update will be provided at February Board meeting.
- The board agreed that the name of the new Subsidiary company would be "Argyll homes for all"

Board Update 9th February 2012

Budget 2012/13

- The Budget for 2012/13 was approved
- Welfare Rights Service – funding approved for a further year (up to 31st March 2013). Other funding streams to support this project continue to be explored.
- Pay Increase – HRCS are consulting with staff on the proposed 2% pay increase. To be brought back to March Board of Management for decision.

Rent Increase 2012/13

- Rent Increase Approved – $RPI + 1\% = 5.8\%$ increase for 2012/13. This equates to £3.58 weekly increase.
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 Members 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

	<p>late influx of applications for Right to Buy towards the end of the deadline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Business Repairs Development – interviews are being held on 17th February. • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 <p>Clarification is being sought from Scottish Government Officials as to where the resources will go.</p> <p>At the Stage 3 of the budget debate on 8th February it was announced that £80million is to be reinstated for affordable housing in the next 3 years programmes.</p> <p>This is still £40million cut over the 3 years, but better than was originally proposed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. A catch up programme has now commenced. Letters are being issued to tenants to update them on timescales <p>Factoring Strategy – Interim Report</p> <p>Members approved the Factoring Strategy which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sets a target of a minimum 300 personal approaches to potential customers per annum ○ Will sets a target for “sign ups” to the Factoring service within 6 months ○ Agrees to a strategy to bring the factoring service into a cost neutral position by 31st March 2013. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A further report on progress will be submitted to the Board in 6 months time. <p>Subsidiary Development</p> <p>The Subsidiary has been named “Argyll Homes For All”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Committee will comprise of 5 members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 existing members from the Board of Management 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 Independent Members (not already on the Board, and could include Senior Staff) ○ Secretary • Councillor McCuish agreed to be Secretary. Board members who are interested in sitting on this Committee are to let HRCS know. <p>Land Disposal Request – Maitland Court, Helensburgh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved <p>Area Committee Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed that updates from the Area Chairs will now be placed in the Board Information pack <p>A.O.C.B.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L Haig briefed members on a development opportunity at the former Rockfield Primary School, Oban. Discussions with Argyll & Bute Council are taking place <p>-----</p> <p>AB commented that local staff advised that a programme is ongoing to carry out loft insulation. AB advised that some ACHA properties would take a lot to make them heat efficient and advised the rent increase isn't coming into line with working people's wages and cost of living – AB added that it's fair for tenants on Housing Benefit, but for the average working tenant, rent is increasing but income is not.</p> <p>RMC advised the Board was very much split during the decision on rent increases and advised he fully understand a lot of tenants do suffer, but the rents needed to go up to fulfill ACHA's business plan and the increase was kept as low as possible.</p> <p>Port Ellen properties – RMC advised this should be a good start – the first new builds for ACHA in Islay.</p> <p>AB advised there is an issue in Soroba with the Roughcast, which is at a current standstill where owners can't afford to participate and AB expressed concern that tenants paying rent could end up subsidizing costs. Discussion took place regarding the number of absentee landlords in Soroba, with comparisons made to the grass cutting projects where ACHA previously cut all the grass with tenants effectively subsidizing and paying for it. IMP commented that it will be very interesting to see if in the future the Council issue statutory repair order notices. AMI advised that there is the same issue in Dunollie, not with roughcasting but issues with the roofs. AB advised he felt the Council should pay some part of the costs or even pay a percentage, as they failed in their duty when they sold the properties and</p>	
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	<p>the problems, and failed in their duty while taking rents for over 30 years. AB further added that if the Council had implemented a factoring service during their ownership we may not be in this position. IMP advised that in order to purchase properties, owners require to get surveys carried out to check the condition prior to purchasing.</p>	
6.	<p>EMAP Projects</p> <p>Report circulated prior to minutes</p> <p>Tiree play park – Members agreed with IMP that Tiree has a very picturesque play park. IMP advised that ACHA inherited the play park at transfer unusually, after it had never been under the Council's Housing Account. IMP advised that the Tiree community fund raised to install the play park and ACHA have continued to maintain and carry out inspections weekly.</p> <p>IMP advised that Tiree Community Business also takes an interest in the playpark and has recently identified funds to replace the existing roundabout and springer toy and advised that ACHA propose to replace a Toddler Cradle Seat which has been removed due to its poor condition along with 2 Flat Swings and to tidy the playpark round the protective matting.</p> <p>IMP asked if members wished to approve this request. Members present unanimously agreed.</p> <p>MMA – advised that in Dunbeg playpark, people are taking their dogs into the park - IMP advised that if we got the name of the people ACHA can approach them.</p> <p>Soroba Play park – IMP advised that some members may feel that works are carried out through EMAP on a number of occasions at Soroba Play park and advised of the recent upgrades. IMP further advised that people are vandalising the fencing at the play park by pulling off the spars on the fencing and asked members if they had any suggestions for how to deal with the issue. RMC advised that there may be a need for a bit more publicity, for example, on the back of the rent increase press release to advise that tenants are subsidising the costs of the vandalism. i.e. ACHA pay half a years rent to fix the playpark spars – hopefully this will encourage people to report incidents to catch the vandals. IMP suggested a photo with the new community police officer. AB advised if the spars were welded, brute force shouldn't be able to remove them. RMC advised they appear to target the ones that have been broken before and re-welded – AB advised the ones that are welded shouldn't be breakable. IMP advised the issue isn't that an indestructible fence is installed but that it shouldn't be vandalised.</p> <p>Members present agreed that a press release has to be issued.</p>	

	Members present unanimously agreed with the EMAP proposal as it was a health & safety issue.	
7.	<p>Tenants Panel Minutes</p> <p>Minutes circulated prior to meeting and noted.</p> <p>RMC apologised and left the meeting. RMC advised this may be his last Area Committee due to the impending elections – RMC was thanked by all present for his commitment to the Area Committee.</p> <p>Item 4 -MM advised she was unaware some of the Right To Buy money goes to private owners. IMP advised a percentage goes to public sector grants.</p>	
8.	<p>FISH Project Update</p> <p>Report circulated prior to meeting.</p> <p>Members agreed both FISH and Debt Advice are very good projects. IMP advised there are a number of staff affected with the projects, secondments' and temporary staff.</p>	
9.	<p>Debt Advice Project Update</p> <p>Report circulated prior to meeting.</p>	
10.	<p>Newsletter</p> <p>Members present were asked what items they believe the Tenants Newsletter should cover. IMP advised this was raised by the Chair of Bute and Cowal where she'd received feedback that the newsletter isn't local enough. AB said it may focus on some areas one issue and then others the next. MM suggested a section for each area. LAD suggested less large pictures, more info on area specific locations. GF suggested ongoing projects within areas.</p> <p>Members agreed they like seeing other areas news.</p>	
11.	<p>Health & Safety Minutes</p> <p>Minutes circulated prior to meeting and noted.</p> <p>Page 3 item 7 – MM advised it states the lights are coming on at the right time so queried why it was a problem? CB advised she wasn't at that particular meeting but suggested it was a typing error and wasn't coming on at the right time. Members noted that the minutes are draft – CB advised that it was agreed that the Chair approves the minutes as soon as possible after the meetings to enable the minutes to be circulated.</p>	

12.	<p>Review of Key Performance Indicators</p> <p>IMP presented KPI figures.</p> <p>IMP highlighted the ending of payments at local offices. IMP advised that staff are keeping tenants updated that come into the office and advised what payment options are available and suit them best.</p> <p>Storms – IMP advised that the Associations Crisis Management Team were in operation 3 times during the severe storms and bad weather.</p> <p>Fire alarms and lift upgrades – IMP advised this has been a very large project.</p> <p>Pressured Area Designation (PAD) came into effect on 30th January 2012. IMP advised all tenants consulted on the issue with a very low response. IMP advised since it's been approved there have been a few complaints. MM advised she'd been under the impression that it would be for tenants from 30th January but hadn't realised it goes back a number of years. IMP advised that PAD is not required in Bute therefore tenants can continue to purchase their property under the Right to buy scheme.</p> <p>Void – Oban 2nd in ranking, currently running at 12 days to let a house with a target of 31 days. IMP advised Bute ranked first</p> <p>Emergency repairs on target – imp advised Islay 1st, OLI 5th</p> <p>Urgent Repairs on target – IMP advised Islay 1st, OLI 5th – MM asked if there was a breakdown and advised that everyone praises the In house team but wondered what the percentage is as the ranking is low. MM asked if she could have a breakdown for Oban – IMP advised these figures aren't just for the In House Team, and covers the islands with private contractors, Mull, Colonsay etc. LAD asked if satisfaction cards are sent to all – IMP advised a percentage is sent out. MM advised there had been an issue raised at the Board Meeting where it was reported that works completed in the November with the satisfaction card being sent in February - GF advised a similar issue.</p> <p>OLI back to 100% for repairs satisfaction.</p> <p>Rent arrears – IMP advised the issue previously where all areas figures were reported inaccurately – IMP advised all areas now fighting to bring percentage figures down.</p>	
13.	<p>Local Report</p> <p>Community Awards –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Port Ellen Primary School Gaelic Choir - £300 • Tobermory Endeavour - £400 	

- Argyll Voluntary Action on behalf of Oban Winter Festival - £72.

Survey Results, Customer Service Centre –

IMP advised that a survey was conducted as a number of services are now carried out by the CSC. IMP advised the survey carried out over 1 week with basic questions. IMP went over the survey results. LAD suggested it would be good to put an article in the tenants newsletter to advise all the services available there as a number of people will only be aware that it is for repairs.

2A2 Colonsay Terr –

IMP provided a picture of the mini kitchens provided at flats 2A1 and 2A2. IMP advised these were previously a 3 bedroom property split into two one bed flats. IMP further advised that the properties 2A1 and 2A2 are now classed as low demand, as offers have been refused a high number of times, including homeless applicants. MM suggested offering to a single man – IMP advised that we have to go through the list, we can't skip applicants. IMP advised if homeless applicants are refusing we need to question why.

Oban Times –

IMP advised that there have been a number of bad press articles recently. IMP showed the article "Roofers new home victim of cowboy repairs" IMP advised in this case we are waiting on scaffolding being erected to start new roof – AB asked if roofs are being carried out with rough casting – IMP advised this particular block has no owner occupiers and is owned in full by ACHA.

"Rockfield Shool Days are numbered?" IMP advised although not directly related to ACHA, Board and Senior Officers are looking into what can be done.

Lynnside Garden, Oban –

IMP advised that works are continuing to be carried out and it is starting to look like a garden. The project has carried out fund raising – IMP asked members if they would like a tour arranged or wait until a later date when more works may be done – Members agreed to postpone.

Perfect Attendance –

IMP advised that OLI staff continue to do well and have a very high level of staff who received perfect attendance for 2011.

New Rent Charges –

IMP advised rent letters have now been issued. IMP provided further information including the highest level rents for OLI and lowest rent which ranged from £89.65 (new build 4 bed property) to £52.54.

IMP advised that Garage sites are where we rent out a plot of land and tenants put on their own shed. IMP advised the varying costs for sites. IMP also advised that TP Sites are £42.13 for OLI.

	<p>Soroba Roughcast – IMP advised discussed previously. IMP advised some of the press articles have been factually inaccurate. IMP advised some RTB owners could have purchased properties for approx £20,000 where as some owners who have purchased during the housing high have purchased for around £100,000 and don't have the same options to raise money against the property for roughcasting.</p> <p>Storm damage Tiree – IMP provided pictures of Rudha Cottages and the extent of the roof damage from the storms.</p> <p>Allpay Payments – IMP provided analysis of the number of transactions that are being made and advised the most popular place to pay rent is Oban's Tesco store which has received 874 payments. IMP advised ranking second is the Co-op with 236 payments. IMP highlighted Coll post office which to date has received 62 payments with ACHA having only 12 properties on the island. IMP advised that ACHA now also have available the Freephone number where tenants can phone and make payment by card. IMP highlighted some of the more varied locations throughout the UK, including the Clyde submarine base, Irvine, Ulverston, possibly tenants on holiday and paying locally.</p> <p>MM apologized and left the meeting.</p>	
14.	<p>AOCB</p> <p>H&S CB advised the issue raised earlier regarding the Health & Safety Minutes has been confirmed as an error and will be rectified.</p> <p>OLI AGM Suggested date Monday 2nd July 2012. Members agreed.</p> <p>Summer Trip IMP suggested that for May's Area Committee Meeting, Members may be interested in a tour of Dalmally to include information regarding the new build properties. IMP further added that Matthew MacAuley from I&R could be invited to provide more information. Members agreed.</p> <p>Local Shows LAD provided date for Appin Show. IMP advised last year there was a presence at Salen, Dalmally and Islay shows – IMP asked if members would like dates to choose for next meeting. IMP advised we may not make Salen show this year as Moira MacQueen may have started her retirement by then. LAD advised Appin show is quite small. AB advised Dalmally show would be good with the new build information for Dalmally.</p>	
15.	Date and Time of Next Meeting	

	<p>Monday 14th May, 11am, Menzies House - tour of Dalmally prior to meeting.</p> <p><i>Addendum – Dalmally tour held on 26th April in advance of meeting. Area Committee meeting will commence on the 14th of May at the usual time of 3pm.</i></p>	
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