

**MID ARGYLL & KINTYRE AREA COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012**  
**The West Loch, Tarbert**

**Attendees**

Sandra MacKenzie, Tenant (SMAK)  
 Colin Davidson, Independent (CD)  
 Sandra Johnston (SJ)  
 Councillor Donald MacMillan, Council Representation (DM)  
 John Muir, Tenant (JM)  
 Carole Ann Shields, Tenant (CAS)  
 Valerie St Helene, Tenant (VSH)

**Staff in Attendance**

Yvonne Litster, Regional Manager – Housing & Neighbourhood Services (YL)  
 Claire Lumb, Admin Officer (CL)  
 John McNab, Finance Manager (JMN)

		Action
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Welcome and Apologies</b></p> <p>SMAK welcomed all members to the meeting. John McNab, Finance Manager, was also welcomed.</p> <p>Apologies – Lochiel Cushnie.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of Previous Meeting – 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012</b></p> <p>Page 1 of the minutes “YL welcomed all members” should read “SMAK welcomed all members”</p> <p>Page 8 of the minutes “This will be dne..” should read “This will be done”.</p> <p>The minutes from 12<sup>th</sup> September were agreed as an accurate record. These were proposed by CAS and seconded by CD.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising (including Information)</b></p> <p>Page 5 of Minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> September – JM asked what financial controls are in place regarding the introduction of the Bedroom Tax as this may lead to arrears. YL explained that she would address this question at Agenda Item 6 during her presentation.</p> <p>At the last meeting Committee Members had asked if the residents at Chalmers Court could be surveyed regarding the EMAP project for raised beds. YL confirmed that this is about to commence and the findings will</p>	

	be presented to the Committee members at their January meeting.	
4.	<b>Conflicts of Interest to Declare</b> No conflicts of interest were declared.	
5.	<b>Correspondence</b> None received	
6.	<b>Regional Managers Report.</b>  <b><u>Investment Programme</u></b>  <b>Mid Argyll</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Heating &amp; Rewire (Contractor: British Gas (New Heating) Ltd)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff have been successful in helping British Gas complete a number of properties this month. Issues out with the contractor's control, mainly the upgrading of the hydro meter upgrade, mean that this is taking longer than it should. The contractor is also slow to carry out snagging problems. 21 Heating installs and Rewires currently open. Both Mid Argyll PSOs supervising this work in their patch as there is currently a site supervisor vacancy. There are also issues with access which is causing some problems.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Windows and Doors (Sidey)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a limited amount of installs at the moment in Mid Argyll. These are being installed as permission are given.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Kitchen &amp; Bathroom (Contractor: Carrillion)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational Therapy bathrooms are the main feature of this programme at the moment. There are 4 installs currently being worked on.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Roof &amp; Roughcast</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing communication with private owners at Oakhill and Oakfield in Tarbert. Awaiting further info from Investment on progress.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>JM asked about the roughcasting situation at a property in Cairnbaan. The Chair asked him to raise this under Any Other Business at the end of the meeting.</p> <b>Kintyre</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Heating &amp; Rewire (Contractor: British Gas (New Heating) Ltd)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British Gas the contractor is continuing to carry out heating and rewire installs in Kintyre using three subcontractors. Installs are sporadic due to access issues. There are issues with finishing off of properties. There are currently 65 properties getting heating and 22 rewires.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>CAS brought up an issue with meters, saying that she has been informed that there are quite a few properties which have been surveyed for Gas</p>	



	<p>pitch with our development are now complete.</p> <p><b>Refurbishment at Dalaruan Street, Campbeltown</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The contract with McKinven and Colville is progressing on programme. The demolition and removal phase is almost complete. The internal partitioning and flooring works are approx 80% complete. The first fix electrical and plumbing works are 50% complete.</li> <li>• Floor plans will be sent out with a copy of the minutes to Committee Members.</li> </ul> <p><b>Non traditional works</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The works to the Orlits in Campbeltown started end of October starting with the lower house numbers in Crosshill and they will move to Range Road with all works being completed in early April.</li> </ul> <p>SMAK asked what an Orlits is – it was explained that it is a non traditional style of property.</p> <p><b><u>Customer Complaints</u></b></p> <p>One hundred and six complaints were dealt with during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012. The Kintyre area has dealt with 9 of these, the Mid Argyll area has dealt with 14.</p> <p><b>In terms of Stage 3 Appeals</b> - The Appeals Committee have upheld the outcome 14 complaints – an apology was issued in response to 1 complaints and a invoice raised for recharges was cancelled</p> <p><b>Stage 4 Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)</b> – As at the end of the previous reporting period the Ombudsman had reviewed 3 complaints previously heard by the Appeals Committee – 1 complaint has been upheld and 2 have not. The Ombudsman is still reviewing a further 3 complaints</p> <p>Our new complaints Policy went live on 1<sup>st</sup> October. There are now only 2 stages for complaints, prior to the Ombudsman investigating.</p> <p>CD asked for further information regarding the complaint upheld by the Ombudsman. YL said that she did not have that information to hand, but would be happy to provide Committee members with a summary of the types of complaints that were passed to the Ombudsman for the next meeting.</p> <p><b><u>Housing Management and Maintenance</u></b></p> <p><b>Low Demand Issues – Kintyre</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As discussed at the last meeting, there are now 12 low demand properties in Kintyre.</li> <li>• This is currently costing us just over £1000 a week in lost rental income</li> <li>• Since April this year this amounts to just over £16,500.</li> <li>• 387 letters were issued to everyone on our waiting list who had</li> </ul>	YL
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	<p>chosen an area in Kintyre to live in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The letter enclosed a property portfolio, with pictures and details of amenities for each property.</li> <li>• Applicants were asked to confirm if they would be interested in these properties, and staff are working through the offers</li> <li>• Subsequently 5 out of the 17 properties are now let with one more just about to be accepted.</li> <li>• We will re-do this exercise for all the new applicants that came onto the list since this mailshot was issued.</li> </ul> <p>CAS commented that some people who had received this letter had been given the wrong impression, i.e. a single person thought they might be entitled to a 4 apartment property, and that it might have been better to target specific properties at applicants. However, YL said that with 400 people to write to this would have added significantly to the costs and the time taken to undertaken this exercise, and that in some cases an applicant may be offered a property that was bigger than their needs if there was no-one else interested in that particular property.</p> <p>CAS advised that she had been approached by people, informing her that offers had been made for the properties on the former Park Square site. YL stated that no offers had been made for these properties. They were not due to be completed until around May 2013.</p> <p>CD asked whether it was thought there would be any issues letting the new properties. YL said the issue would likely be in the resulting vacancies from offering the new properties to applicants on the transfer waiting list. There appears to be interest in the new build properties.</p> <p>SJ asked how having an extra bedroom would affect a tenant under the new welfare reform. YL said that we have informed applicants of the new reforms and a number of people have indicated to us that they would not take an extra bedroom because of this.</p> <p><b>Key Performance Indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members were reminded that the Key Performance Indicator information is now contained within their information pack.</li> <li>• The Void figure for Mid Argyll was wrong. The data will be updated to reflect that this is incorrect. They actually met their target. It was amended from 68 days to 10 days.</li> <li>• Arrears – there has been a rise in the rent arrears figures, this is due to a couple of cases with arrears above £2000.</li> <li>• Post Inspections – target not met this month as we are trying to ensure the yearly target of 10% is met.</li> </ul> <p>SMAK asked YL to clarify the percentages for the relet categories.</p> <p><b>Estate Management</b></p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since July staff have been issuing estate management surveys to tenants and residents in both Mid Argyll and Kintyre</li> <li>• Mid Argyll – 298 letters, 40 responses – this equates to 30% of estates surveyed so far, with a 13% response rate.</li> <li>• Kintyre – 612 letters, 49 responses – this equates to 37% of estates surveyed and a response rate of 8%</li> <li>• The survey asks questions on matters such as whether the resident thinks the area they live in is attractive, how secure they feel or if there are any additional services they would like the Association to provide any additional surveys</li> <li>• The information is then fed into the 7 Year Estate Management Plan, which is then presented to the Area Committee for approval on suggested projects.</li> <li>• This is a rolling project, tenants in other areas in Mid Argyll &amp; Kintyre will be written to at a later date.</li> <li>• A report on the progress of our Estate Management commitments will be presented to the Board of Management over the next couple of months.</li> <li>• As there is a huge cost element to this project the report will look at whether there is another way to gauge opinion.</li> <li>• SMAK asked whether savings could be made by emailing surveys to people. YL said yes that was a possibility, however, we do not hold e-mail addresses for owners. CAS asked whether a possibility could be for staff to knock on doors and ask that they are completed at this point.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tenants and Residents Association</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first Meeting of Dunchologan Travelling Persons Association was successfully held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October.</li> <li>• This is only the 2<sup>nd</sup> tenants association to have been set up by Travelling Persons in Argyll.</li> <li>• The tenants there are keen to work with the Association for the improvement of the Site and surrounding area.</li> </ul> <p><b>Argyll Homes for All</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YL provided an update on the development of ACHA's repair service</li> </ul> <p><b>Welfare Reform</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In July the WROs sent approx 960 letters to those suspected of under occupation that may be affected by the bedroom tax through Welfare Reform.</li> <li>• We are working on our Welfare Reform Strategy, which includes work on: Developing posters, newsletter articles, briefing notes, to ensure our tenants are well informed.</li> <li>• Staff training</li> <li>• Strategy for visiting tenants that are likely to be affected by the 'bedroom tax'</li> <li>• Reviewing our allocations policy</li> <li>• Looking at arrears prevention work – we no longer will have a</li> </ul>	
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	<p>guaranteed income as all benefits will be paid directly to the tenant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand held terminals to take on office visits, to assist tenants in paying.</li> </ul> <p>JMN advised that it is estimated that approx £600,000 per month is currently received by ACHA through a direct payment of Housing Benefit. This is currently guaranteed income that we won't have following welfare reform.</p> <p>A general discussion was had on the difficulties facing ACHA, especially regarding the lack of one-bedroom properties.</p> <p><b>Communicating Via E-Mail:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee Members may be aware; we are currently driving a campaign to encourage all our customers to provide us with their e-mail address to allow us to communicate with them via this method.</li> <li>• This has huge cost savings to the association.</li> <li>• A prize draw was set up to encourage customers to provide their e-mail address as a way of communication with them.</li> <li>• A tenant in Helensburgh won £100 in vouchers for simply giving ACHA her email address</li> </ul> <p><b>Sunflower Competition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The winner of the sunflower competition was Ruby Dunlop of the Riverside Rascals Nursery Lochgilphead. Her winning sunflower was 192cm.</li> <li>• Pictured in the presentation was Sandra Mackenzie presenting Ruby's certificate and gift vouchers to Ruby. Also pictured is Ruby's mother. Pictured as well is Ruby with her sunflower. The nursery won £40 vouchers, Ruby £10.</li> </ul> <p>YL explained that we had prepared a press release for the paper; however the Argyll Advertiser had gone ahead and published a smaller article which has prevented us from issuing our own press release.</p> <p><b>Good Neighbour Award</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This year's good neighbour Award went to Betty Rintoul from Lochgair Place, Tarbert.</li> <li>• Pictured in the presentation are Sandra Mackenzie who nominated her and Bill McIntyre, ACHA's Chairperson.</li> </ul>	
7.	<p><b>Estate Management Action Plan</b></p> <p><b>a) Estate Management Action Plan Budgets</b></p> <p>It was explained that the Committee would be presented at each meeting with a copy of the Budgets.</p>	

	<p><b>b) Estate Management Action Plan – Isle View, Machrihanish</b></p> <p>This project was re-presented to the Committee with further photos including a photo of the type of fencing which is proposed.</p> <p>The proposed works is replace the fencing and gates to the front garden of numbers 7.8 and 11 Isleview, Machrihanish. This will be done with bow top fencing</p> <p>Financial Implications: Costs of works is £5,950 plus VAT of £1,190 – total cost of £7,140</p> <p>Risk Implications: No risks expected.</p> <p>Decision: The Committee still has reservations regarding this project due to the high cost. It was felt that there were other alternatives such as repairing the existing fence and painting it with rust preventative paint. It was decided that these alternatives would be researched and presented at the next Committee meeting in January.</p> <p>If any Committee Members have any ideas about any projects they should contact a member of staff.</p> <p>It was asked whether the project at Ralston Road could go ahead due its low cost. YL to investigate to see whether there are funds.</p>	YL
8.	<p><b>Community Action Fund Applications</b></p> <p>SMAK explained that the Committee had a £1500 budget left for three further meetings, leaving £500 per meeting. It was decided that rather than splitting it between Mid Argyll and Kintyre it would be given to the most deserving cause.</p> <p>The four applications this month were</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) New Application – Fyne Families (Mid Argyll)</li> <li>b) New Application – Tarbert Afterschool care (Mid Argyll)</li> <li>c) New Application – Home Start (Kintyre)</li> <li>d) New Application – KADAS (Kintyre)</li> </ul> <p>It was a unanimous agreement to give £500 to Fyne Families who requested funds for repairs to the portacabin at Dunchologan Travelling Persons Site.</p> <p>YL to clarify what the letters to the applicants say before they are issued with SMAK's signature.</p>	CL/YL
9.	<p><b>Membership Strategy – Draft for Comment</b></p> <p>Committee Members were asked to review their draft Membership Strategy.</p>	



	<p>CD commented on 5.3 “The positive and negative financial impact of this strategy.” He suggested this was changed to the “The financial costs...of this strategy.</p> <p>A list of events will be provided and Members will decide which ones they feel will be important to attend. It was thought that it would be good to get feedback from these events, i.e. whether Membership numbers had increased following these events.</p> <p>It was commented that the phrase on one of the posters was misleading and needs to be clarified. It reads “ACHA ....offers a £1 for life membership”. This reads as though ACHA pays the person a £1. It was also felt that the posters and application were a bit dry and would benefit from a bit of brightening up. Some ideas will be brought back to the next meeting.</p> <p>SMAK suggested that we write to the local Chamber of Commerce or Rotary Club to try to reach the wider community. This will be entered into the strategy</p> <p>CAS &amp; VSH left the meeting at 2:35pm.</p> <p>SMAK commented that on the results of the Customer Visits to the Office, all the respondents for Mid Argyll and Kintyre stated that they were aware of our Area Committee.</p>	<p>YL</p> <p>CL</p>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>Development of the Tenants and Residents Association Strategy</b></p> <p>Members were asked for their opinion in developing their Tenants and Residents Association strategy.</p> <p>One suggestion is that members of existing Associations be required to become Members of ACHA. YL to check the governance regarding this.</p> <p>It was explained that these associations are not as strong as they once were and there are only now 6 such Associations, with the new one created at Dunchologan Travelling Persons Site.</p> <p>One suggestion is that we could focus on supporting existing Associations rather than promoting new ones. SMAK commented that ACHA tried to set up one in Tarbert but only two people attended the meeting.</p> <p>Another suggestion is that we could promote Associations through Community Councils.</p> <p>Draft comments will be presented, but it maybe that no action is required but we could review it in a year's time.</p>	CL/YL
<b>11.</b>	<p><b>Customer Visits to ACHA offices 2012 - Draw</b></p> <p>It was explained that visitors to the office were asked to complete a questionnaire and that they would be entered into a prize draw to win</p>	

	<p>£25 vouchers. YL commented that since the withdrawal of the cash collection service at Area Offices the number of respondents had reduced.</p> <p>SJ drew the winner for Kintyre. This is Ashley McAulay from Glenside. JM drew the winner for Mid Argyll. This is James Stewart from Leacainn Terrace.</p>	
12.	<p><b>Guest: John McNab, Finance Manager</b>  <b>A presentation on the Strategic Objectives of the Finance and IT Department</b></p> <p>JMN presented his report on the above.</p> <p>In addition, he said that we receive £600,000 every 4 weeks from housing benefit which is half our budget. He is currently working with the Welfare Rights Team to ensure that the implementation of Universal Credit does not become a problem.</p> <p>In terms of JMN's presentation, SMAK asked what money we use to pay the £60 million before the 30 years are up. JMN answered that this will be paid out of our income.</p> <p>After 30 years it will be decided whether we wish to reinvest in our properties, for example some properties may require refurbishment again.</p> <p>CD commented that as an organisation ACHA seems to be increasing our staff levels, and he asked what our strategy was for reducing our staffing levels. YL explained that some staff were on temporary contracts, for example to assist with the Investment Programme, but the level of work is likely to reduce significantly after 2015 for these staff. JMN would come back with some further details in terms of the business plan.</p>	JMN
13.	<p><b>Agenda Items for meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013</b>  <b>These are</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at Community Events for 2013</li> <li>• List of ACHA Policies for Review during 2013</li> <li>• Membership Strategy – Progress</li> <li>• Tenants &amp; Residents Strategy – Progress</li> <li>• Judging of Employee of the Season – Autumn Award</li> </ul> <p>YL explained that the forms would be issued to Members prior to the January meeting for them to judge the Winter Employee of the Season. She would be happy to discuss by phone if anyone had any queries.</p> <p>The future of the Garden in Bloom competition was also suggested as an agenda item for January with an information paper to be issued on how we promote the competition as it was felt that the number of nominations has decreased. It was asked if there could be clarification on the</p>	

	<p>container competition as well.</p> <p>It was also suggested that if a tenant wins the competition 3 years in a row, a rule is brought in that there has to be a year's gap before the garden can be nominated again to encourage others to participate. YL suggested that a letter be issued to tenants explaining the reasoning for this.</p>	YL/CL
<b>14</b>	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p>DM asked about the future of the play park at Dewar Avenue as there had been some publicity in the press. YL explained that consultation had been undertaken with the residents as it was poorly used and at the time there had been no objections.</p> <p>YL was asked to provide the ratio of ACHA tenants versus Owners in the vicinity, and if any information could be provided in terms of the number of children under 12 in the vicinity.</p> <p>DM also asked about a fence by the Bowling Green in Lochgilphead which he believed had been transferred to ACHA at stock transfer. Staff to check this out to see whether it can be repaired.</p> <p>JM asked about the situation with the office accommodation in Helensburgh. YL explained that the Beacon Trust had been served notice and three tenants are currently being decanted to provide land at Stuckleckie Road to build new office accommodation.</p> <p>SMAK said that the tenants at Lochgair Place were due to have new heating and rewiring in the New Year but it would be helpful to have a more specific time, e.g. January, or February as to when this will happen. YL said that we would try to provide a more definite date.</p> <p>JM asked about a property in Cairnbaan which had very poor roughcasting. He was asked to bring the address into the office and we will find out whether it is our responsibility.</p>	<p>YL</p> <p>IML</p> <p>CL</p>
<b>15</b>	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting</b></p> <p>January 9<sup>th</sup> 2013 at the Ardshiel Hotel Campbeltown, lunch at 1:45pm, meeting starts at 2:30pm.</p>	All