

MID ARGYLL & KINTYRE AREA COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, 12th September at 2:30pm
The Ardshiel,

Attendees

Sandra MacKenzie, Tenant (SMAK)
 Colin Davidson, Independent (CD)
 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)
 Sarah Campbell, Local Manager, Housing Services (SC)
 Iain McLeod, Local Manager, Property Services (IMcL)

		Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies Sandra Johnston and Lochiel Cushnie. SMAK welcomed all members to the meeting.	
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting – 4th July 2012 The minutes from 4 th July 2012 were agreed as an accurate record. These were proposed by CAS and seconded by JM.	
3.	Matters Arising (including Information) Health and Safety Minutes 14.05.12 pg 2. It was asked what PPE stood for. This is “Personal Protective Equipment”.	
4.	Conflicts of Interest to Declare No conflicts of interest were declared.	
5.	Correspondence None received	
6.	Regional Managers Report. Before delivering the Report YL advised members that there had been significant IT issues affecting ACHA which has resulted in the IT systems being unavailable for several days. Some systems were still not working. This has impacted on the information available for the report.	

Investment Programme

Mid Argyll

- **Heating & Rewire (Contractor: British Gas (New Heating) Ltd)**
 - There is frustration growing at the slowness of British Gas in completing properties they have been working on. There are continual visits by staff to try and help but very little co-ordination from British Gas. The programme is also subject to a lot of changes which makes it difficult to plan. In addition there are still issues over the amount of snagging. These issues will be brought up at the monthly meetings staff have with the contractors.
- **Windows & Doors (Contractor: Sidey)**
 - There are a limited amount of installs at the moment in Mid Argyll.
- **Kitchen & Bathroom (Contractor: Carrillion)**
 - Occupational Therapy bathrooms are the main feature of this programme at the moment, along with the odd kitchen being installed. Carrillion's sub-contractor Kevan Brown has been an excellent contractor in both communications and quality.
- **Roof & Roughcast**
 - **Mid Argyll** – Area staff have completed their prioritising program for years 6-8 (currently year 6) and this info has been passed to our colleagues in the Investment department. There is ongoing communication with private owners at Oakhill and Oakfield – Tarbert. YL explained that as there is a mix of ACHA tenants and private owners here, and all need to be in agreement for the work to be carried out before we can proceed.

JM asked what the term “closed” meant in relation to the Investment Programme. YL explained that this is term used when a property had been completed and the work “closed off”.

Kintyre

- **Heating & Rewire (Contractor: British Gas (New Heating) Ltd)**
 - The contractor has started carrying out heating and rewiring installs in Kintyre. Like Mid Argyll there are frustrations with the slowness of the contractor to complete properties.
- **Windows & Doors (Contractor: Sidey)**
 - No installs at the moment in Kintyre. The properties that are left are the ones with planning issues. These are being installed as permissions are given.

- **Kitchen & Bathroom (Contractor: Carrillion)**

There are a limited amount of installs at the moment, mainly Occupational Therapy bathrooms.

- **Roof & Roughcast**

- As with Mid Argyll, staff have completed their prioritising program for colleagues in the Investment department. Ongoing communication with private owners at Smith Drive & Ralston Road, Campbeltown is taking place – again, this is a mixed tenure block and we need the permission of the owners to carry out the work.

Customer Complaints

Sixty four complaints were dealt with during the period 1st April to 30th June 2012.

The Kintyre area has dealt with 8 of these, the Mid Argyll area has dealt with 7.

In terms of Stage 3 Appeals - The Appeals Committee have upheld the outcome of 7 complaints

For Stage 4 Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) complaints –the Ombudsman has found in favour of one complainant, making recommendations to the Association.

Housing Management and Maintenance

Factoring Strategy – Update

- 1st April – 14th Sept – Total 180 contacts made
- 32 properties (17 Blocks) signed up to ACHA's Factoring Service
- ACHA Wide – we now act as Factor for 174 properties
- New Property Factors Legislation will now affect the future delivery of the Strategy.

YL further advised members that the Property Factors Act, which comes into effect from 1st October this year, will require major consultation. Therefore, after discussions with ACHA's legal advisors, BTO, it was agreed ACHA should suspend further discussions with owners until we are able to respond to the requirements of the new Property Factors Act.

This new legislation may affect issues such as ground maintenance. We will be required to register all properties which may be around 11,000-12,000 entries.

High Bank Park Bridge

- Planning permission has now been received to replace the bridge at High Bank Park. Members will recall that the council transferred the ownership of this bridge to ACHA at stock transfer. A tree was required to be removed to allow the old bridge to be removed.

	<p>Low Demand Issues – Kintyre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As we have a low demand issue in Kintyre 17 properties have been designated as low demand • This is currently costing us just over £1000 in lost rental income • Since April this year this amounts to just over £16,500. • 387 applicants have been written to on the waiting list to gauge their interest for these properties • Applicants have been issued with a portfolio of pictures and information about each of the properties. • It is hoped by targeting individuals we may be able to relet some of these properties. • If this exercise fails we may need to look at what other options are available to us. This could be offering a week's free rent, providing white goods or fully decorating properties or consider the long term future of particular properties to see if they are worth keeping • The Committee will be kept updated with the progress, <p>Key Performance Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members were reminded that the Key Performance Indicator information is now contained within their information pack. • Performance remains good and we are on target for hitting our year to date figures on almost all categories. • However, we have an issue with Low Demand in Kintyre, as previously reported, and Relets to homeless, void turnover, arrears figures, repairs satisfaction and all the repairs categories. • There were no concerns to report this month. <p>Estate Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In July and August letters with estate management survey letters have gone out to some areas in both Mid Argyll and Kintyre • Mid Argyll – 298 letters, 40 responses • Kintyre – 612 letters, 49 responses • 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 • This is a rolling project, tenants in other areas in Mid Argyll & Kintyre will be written to at a later date. <p><u>Wider Strategic Issues</u></p> <p>Building our own In House Repairs Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A report will be submitted to the Board of Management on 27th September, to consider the proposals. • Members were reminded that John Forbes was employed by ACHA to look at the Association building our own IHRT across the 	
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whole of the area.

Scottish Government Consultation

- The Scottish Government Consultation -on the future of right to buy has now concluded. ACHA participated in a focus group with the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations to assist with their response to the consultation document and in addition ACHA submitted their own response.

Welfare Reform

- Members are aware from previous presentations, and of course the national press about the new Universal Credit that is coming into force.
- ACHA have developed a strategy to try to deal with the effects of universal credit.
- Anyone who is living in a property that is deemed as too big for them will no longer receive full housing benefit. For example, if you are a single parent and have access to children at the weekend and you live in a 2 bedroom property. You will no longer get full benefit as the government deem this property to be too big for you.
- This is known as the Bedroom Tax. However it will not affect pensioners.
- Additionally, tenants will no longer have the option to have their housing benefit paid directly to their landlord. So, they could receive a big cheque for all their benefits each month.
- Some of these people have no experience in budgeting and there are concerns that the money will not be paid to the landlord.

Garden in Bloom

The Committee were shown photos of the Garden in Bloom winners.

Mid Argyll

- Best Garden – Mr & Mrs McLeod 8 Poltalloch Street. They won an engraved vase and £50 vouchers
- 2nd Prize Best Garden – Mrs Graham 14 Jubilee Terrace. She won £30 vouchers
- 3rd Prize Best Garden – Mr McMichael, 3 Factory Land. He won £20 vouchers
- Best Container – Mr McLennan, 8 McCracken Court. He won £30 vouchers and an engraved vase
- 2nd Prize Best Container – Mrs Speirs – 5 Chalmers Court, She won £20 vouchers
- 3rd Prize Best Container – Ms Porterfield – 16 Chalmers Court. She won £10 vouchers.

Kintyre

- Best Garden – Mrs MacPhail, 34B Albyn Avenue. She won an engraved vase and £50 vouchers. This is the 3rd time Mrs

	<p>MacPhail has won this competition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd Prize Best Garden – Mrs Gray 15 Drumlemble. She won £20 vouchers • 3rd Prize Best Garden – Mr & Mrs Croft, 5 Dalintober. They won £20 vouchers • Best Container – Mrs Livingstone 83 Millknowe. She won £30 vouchers and an engraved vase • 2nd Prize Best Container – Mr and Mrs Sergeant – 6 Lady Mary Row. They won £20 vouchers • 3rd Prize Best Container – Ms Lay – 17 Dalintober. She won £10 vouchers. <p>Sunflower Competition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of the Sunflower Competition, the largest sunflower was grown by the Ruby Dunlop of Riverside Rascals Nursery. • Their sunflower measured 192 cm. The nursery will receive £40 in vouchers and Ruby will receive a voucher for £10. • Only 3 entries were received, however, the feedback we have received has been extremely positive, with reports that the children enjoyed this project. • It would appear that there were some “growing” problems, and we will arrange to provide better information and advice to be issued to nurseries next year. • The 2nd placed nursery was Baddens Farm which was grown by all the children. This was 88cm. • The 3rd placed nursery was ELFS, their child managed 35cm but the flower didn’t bloom. • There were no entries returned from the Kintyre area. <p>Councillor MacMillan left the meeting.</p>	
7.	<p>Community Action Fund Applications</p> <p>Information provided on how to successfully process applications as this will be carried out at our meeting in November.</p> <p>Members were asked to give some thought as to how they want to proceed with this for the next meeting and how they wish to apportion the monies available. It was agreed that Members would prefer to save some applications for each meeting. It was requested that it would be useful to get an idea of the number of applications received over the past two years. CL to obtain this information.</p> <p>It was asked what was the maximum amount for each application. This is £500 but does not need to be given.</p>	CL
8.	<p>Estate Management</p> <p>YL advised members that ACHA had recently undertaken a review of the type of work we are able to undertake as part of our repair service and as such EMAP work has been suspended until further notice.</p>	

	<p>However, it was agreed to continue with the decision making to allow work to progress immediately once funds become available.</p> <p>IML gave a brief outline of the 7-year action plan advising Members that this was a work in progress and open to change. Year One is in the process of being fully costed with various consultations with tenants and private owners taking place.</p> <p>There was a discussion regarding the EMAP project for a raised bed at Chalmers Court. IML explained that he had not been able to get another contractor to quote for the job, but he was able to provide a breakdown of the work involved for the contractor who had quoted for the job.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that staff would survey the tenants to find out if they felt that the price was worth the benefits they would get.</p> <p>Another project highlighted for Year One was the cleaning of the gutters at Chalmers Court. CD highlighted that it would be worthwhile clearing the moss from the roof at the same time. IML commented that this would be looked at as part of the same project.</p> <p>The Committee were asked to consider the following projects:</p> <p>8a Balcony Railings – Witchburn Road, Campbeltown The proposed works is the replacement of the balcony railings at 100A to 100D Witchburn Road, Campbeltown.</p> <p>Financial Implications: The cost of works is £1660.00 plus VAT of £332, total cost £1992.00.</p> <p>Risk Implications: No risks expected.</p> <p>Decision: Agreed</p> <p>8b Fencing – 146 Ralston Road, Campbeltown The proposed works is to replace the fencing at 146 Ralston Road, Campbeltown.</p> <p>Financial Implications: The cost of works is £312.63 plus VAT of £62.53, total cost £375.16.</p> <p>Risk Implications: No risks expected.</p> <p>Decision: Agreed</p> <p>8c Fencing & Gates – 36 New Parliament Place The proposed works is supply and fit a galvanised a palisade fence and two gates at 36 New Parliament Place at either end of the common pathway.</p> <p>Financial Implications: The cost of works is £960 plus VAT of £192, total</p>	IML
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	<p>cost of £1152.00</p> <p>Risk Implications: No risks expected.</p> <p>Decision: Agreed.</p> <p>8d Fencing – Isle View</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: It was decided to defer this to the next Committee meeting when further photos could be provided along with a photo of this type of fencing.</p> <p>Committee Members were asked to decide upon priorities for the agreed projects.</p> <p>1st Priority should be the proposal at 146 Ralston Road, Campbeltown</p> <p>2nd Priority should the proposal at 36 New Parliament Place.</p> <p>3rd Priority should be the proposal at Witchburn Road, Campbeltown.</p>	IML
9.	<p>Membership Strategy – Members to commence the development</p> <p>Members were asked to consider the development of the Membership Strategy.</p> <p>Some ideas to be considered include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing current membership • Attending events • Tenants newsletters • Look into the benefits of becoming a member • Free Membership <p>YL explained that she was unable to provide the Committee Members with the list of current ACHA members due to a current Data Protection query. She was asked to find out what the difficulties were in providing this to Area Committee members, who were given the responsibility for developing the Membership Strategy for their area.</p> <p>YL agreed to produce a first draft of the strategy for the November meeting.</p>	YL YL

10.	Autumn Newsletter – agree content Members were asked for their input. Garden in Bloom was suggested as a topic. It was also suggested that we could do an article on the site visits taken place today by Members to Park Square and Dalaruan Place. It was agreed that the tour of the New Developments would be included.	
11.	Tenant Involvement Strategy – Consultation – closing date for comments – Friday 14th September SMAK advised that they received the papers by post and if anyone has any comments. CD commented that it was a very long document and took a lot of time to read.	
12	Youth Strategy – Consultation – closing date for comments – Friday 14th September SMAK advised that they received the papers by post and if anyone has any comments. JM commented that it was a very well written strategy. YL agreed to pass on the comments to Gillian McInnes who was the author of the strategy.	
14	Future Agenda Items YL advised that a paper would be issued in advance of the next meeting regarding future agenda items. These agenda items include Community Action Funds, Employee of the Season and a Tenants and Residents Association Strategy. YL encouraged the Committee to put forward ideas of any other matters they would like included on the Agenda.	All
15	AOCB SMK suggested it would be a good idea to see the Garden in Bloom from other areas, to compare the photos from different areas as well as to see how other areas promote this competition. There was a discussion about the rules of the Garden in Bloom competition, such as whether someone can be barred for entering for winning too often or whether staff could nominate gardens. VSH commented that she would have liked to have been involved in the Garden in Bloom presentations as she was involved in the judging. YL said that we would take her comments on board.	CL
16	Date, time and Venue of next meeting Wednesday 14 th November 2012 at West Loch Hotel, Tarbert (lunch at 12:45pm, meeting starting at 1:30pm)	