

Putting Tenants First

inside ... the 2010
Annual Report

Autumn 2010



It was another proud day for ACHA as more new homes were handed over to tenants.

MacMillan Court in Ardrishaig was opened by Alan Reid MP along with local Councillor Donnie MacMillan on a very wet and windy 1st October.

Named after Cllr MacMillan, a member of ACHA's local area committee and in recognition of over 25 years of service to the public, these 18 new affordable homes are welcomed by the many people in need of housing.

One of the new tenants, Lisa Ross (pictured with daughter Erin) said "there just aren't words to explain how happy I am to now have a secure and permanent home".

The new flats have solar powered water heaters and two of the ground floor flats are designed with full disability access. This contract provided employment for 58 tradesmen and 6 apprentices.



MacMillan Court, Ardrishaig



The Housing Bill which is being considered by the Scottish Parliament may include a new **Scottish Social Housing Charter**. The principles of this will be produced by the Govt. but each landlord will discuss with tenants and set out what it aims to achieve. The Government would like to develop this with input from as many tenants as possible. If you would like to participate in this you can contact Laura Gilbert from the Scottish Govt on 0131 244 5587 or go to the website <http://housingcharter.scotland.gov.uk> or attend an event in Kilmory, Lochgilphead on 10th Nov. The Tenants Panel discussed this issue with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service and will be submitting their comments to the Government soon.

The Association held its fourth AGM on 23rd September 2010. I was really pleased that so many people were interested in standing for the Association's Board of Management and Area Committees. It is testimony to the voluntary commitment and spirit of so many people in Argyll and Bute that they are willing to give up their time to improve housing for others.



Since its inception in 2004 the volunteers who have made up ACHA's Board of Management have unstintingly given up their time on a voluntary basis to drive forward housing improvement, new build housing and improved services throughout our communities. This is not an easy task as much personal time and commitment has been given as well as travelling great distances to represent the Association in Argyll and beyond. For that commitment I would like to give my personal thanks.

We also live in interesting and challenging times. On the 20th October 2010 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, will announce his comprehensive spending review. This is the exercise which will map out the Government's spending priorities for the next three years. We have all read about the opinions expressed regarding the state of the country's finances. In the difficult times that lie ahead, I would hope that the Government is able to make choices between needs and aspirations.

With 3800 families and single people on waiting lists for affordable housing in Argyll and Bute, the case for maintaining the housing budget is very apparent.

While it will be up to the Scottish Government to prioritise what finally comes out of the comprehensive spending review, I would sincerely hope that the block grant made available to Scotland is maintained in such a way that housing needs can realistically be addressed on the ground in the years to come.

Best Wishes

Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive



Pictured left are some of the new members of ACHA's **Board of Management** elected at the AGM on 23rd September. Pictured are;
 Back row (l to r): Cllr MacKay, Cllr Colville, Michael Brown, Cllr McCuish, Norman Beaton, Bill McIntyre, Ann Trotter, Ronnie Finnighan.
 Front row (l to r) Alexandra Glazsher, Margaret MacGregor, John Muir, Lorraine Drysdale, Betty Rhodick, Marri Malloy, Sandra MacKenzie.

During August and September ACHA's 4 **Area Committees** also held their AGM's. If you would like to contact your local Area Committee please ask a member of staff for the contact details. The members of your local Area Committees are:

| Bute & Cowal | Mid Argyll & Kintyre | Helensburgh/Lomond | Oban, Lorn & Isles |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| Margaret MacGregor T (Chair) | Sandra MacKenzie T (Chair) | Ann Trotter (Chair) T | George Farquhar T (Chair) |
| Carol Ann Shearer T (Vice Chair) | Carol Anne Shileds T (Vice Chair) | George Douglas Ind (Vice Chair) | Alister MacIntyre T (Vice Chair) |
| Anne Dunlop T | Lochiel Cushnie T | Bill McIntyre T | Mary MacLeod T |
| Cllr Bruce Marshall (Council nominee) | John Muir T | Maisie Dunlay T | Lorraine Drysdale T |
| | Valerie St Helene T | Michael Brown T | Janet MacIntosh T |
| | Susan Paterson Ind | Alexandra Glazsher T | Marri Malloy Ind |
| | Cllr Donnie MacMillan (Council nominee) | Joan Roy T | Cllr Roddy McCuish (Council nominee) |
| There are currently 3 tenant vacancies | 1 tenant vacancy | Sonja Aitken Ind | 1 tenant vacancy and |
| 2 independent " | 1 independent vacancy | Cllr Danny Kelly (Council nominee) | 1 independent vacancy |
| | | 1 independent vacancy | |



Half a million !!



The FISH Argyll project which gives welfare rights assistance to tenants has reached an amazing milestone – half a million pounds in previously unclaimed benefits have been obtained for tenants from all over Argyll and Bute.

“It’s a wonderful service”

These were the words of Mrs Galloway from Dunoon (pictured right) after the FISH Argyll project helped her. *“I didn’t think I would be entitled to anything extra but I made the call to Garrick Collier and I did get a result. I would definitely recommend the service to other tenants”.*



Since the project began in March, the four Welfare Rights Officers have so far helped around 500 tenants to claim benefits for a variety of circumstances. These are benefits and credits that you may be unaware that you are due so please contact the Welfare Rights officer for your area who would be happy to spend a little time to see if there is anything they can help you claim. This service is **free** and **confidential** between you and the welfare rights officer:

- David Kelly (Helensburgh and Lomond) - 01436 65 8811
- Garrick Collier (Bute and Cowal) - 01369 70 8687
- Fiona Evamy (Mid Argyll and Kintyre) - 01586 55 9099
- Corrina MacKenzie (Oban, Lorn & Isles) - 01631 56 7924



Mr/s Kennedy
Helensburgh



Wilma Little
Ardrishaig



Jessie MacPhail
Campbeltown



Laura MacGregor
Bute

Some of the winners and gardens from the 2010 Garden Competition. Well done to everyone!



Mrs Cowan
Dalmally

How To Contact the ACHA Area Offices

Helensburgh & Lomond telephone 01436 658700
31 James Street, Helensburgh G84 8AS
housing.lomond@acha.co.uk

Cowal telephone 01369 708688
Dolphin Hall, Manse Avenue, Dunoon PA23 8DQ
housing.cowal@acha.co.uk

Bute telephone 01700 501314
Union Street, Rothesay PA20 0HD
housing.bute@acha.co.uk

Mid Argyll telephone 01546 604800
Dalriada House, Lochgilphead PA31 8ST
housing.midargyll@acha.co.uk

Kintyre telephone 01586 559055
Old Quay Head, Campbeltown PA28 6ED
housing.kintyre@acha.co.uk

Islay telephone 01496 301312
Jamieson Street, Bowmore PA43 7HP
housing.islay@acha.co.uk

Oban, Lorn and Isles telephone 01631 567962
Glenshellach Business Park, Oban PA34
housing.lorn@acha.co.uk

Mull telephone 01688 301025
Breadalbane Street, Tobermory, Mull PA75 6PX

ACHA's Community Action Fund

Oban High School Pipe Band
Rothesay parent/toddler group
Bowmore Harbour Association
Oban/District Disability Forum
Southend Playpark Committee
Rosneath Highland Gathering
Rosneath Voluntary Library

If you are part of a group that could make use of a small grant, then contact ACHA on 01631 567912 and ask for our Community Action Fund application form - it's only one page. Good luck!

**FREEPHONE REPAIRS No:
0800 028 2755**

HEAT Argyll

ACHA has developed a new project to help tenants. Let us put you in touch with Solas Scotland for advice and guidance to make sure you have a warm home at a cost you can afford. Contact any member of ACHA staff who will be happy to pass your details on to Solas Scotland who will then contact you directly.

- Advice on how to use your heating system efficiently
- Give you some hints and tips on how to reduce your fuel bills
- If you have a prepayment meter, check to make sure the meter is set correctly
- Where applicable, ensure that you receive your Supplier's Social Tariff – this will enable you to get your fuel at the cheapest price, no matter how you pay
- If needed, we will contact your fuel supplier and arrange a suitable budget method
- Provide impartial advice on changing your fuel supplier

Get in touch with us and ask for this FREE and impartial service and get your costs down before the cold weather sets in and your next fuel bill arrives!!

Did you know ... In 2009/10 ACHA had contracts to the value of £25 million approx. The largest 10 contractors employ 326 staff on our contracts and 81% of these employees live in Argyll.

If you would like this newsletter in larger print, in an alternative language, on audio cassette/CD or in an electronic format or you would like someone to read it or explain any of it please contact Gillian McInnes on 01546 604576 or gillian.mcinnnes@acha.co.uk All our newsletters can be downloaded from our website www.acha.co.uk