

Garden in Bloom 2014

Bute winner—

Best Garden Mr & Mrs Cunningham



Cowal Winners—above Best Garden, Mrs Jean McKellar.
Best container winner was Mrs Mary Johnston



Mid Argyll Winners—

Best Garden
Mrs A Graham,
Lochgilphead;
Best Container -

Mr Taylor, Tarbert (pictured above on the left with Sandra MacKenzie Area Committee Vice Chair, and joint 2nd winner Mr Grieve)



Kintyre winners—Best Garden Ms R Gray, Campbeltown; Best Container Mr & Mrs Stewart, Campbeltown

Helensburgh & Lomond winners—

Best Garden Mrs MacKenzie;
Helensburgh



Best Container Mrs Exley,
Helensburgh

Oban, Lorn & the Isles winners—Mr N (Smiler) MacFarlane, won 1st prize in Oban; Mr D Black won 2nd prize in Oban. Mr & Mrs Smalley, Coll; Mrs A Cowan, Dalmally/Lochawe; Mr & Mrs Coughlan, Dunbeg; Mr & Mrs MacLean, Taynuilt; Mr & Mrs Light, Appin/Connel; Mr & Mrs Donaldson, Mull; Mr M Halbert, South Lorn and Ms J Niven, Tiree

Pictured—Left Mrs Donaldson, and right Mr MacFarlane



As we near the end of the best Spring, Summer and Autumn in many years our thoughts inevitably turn to Winter. Six out of the eight years of ACHA's existence we have seen Winters with extreme frost and high winds. We have had temperatures as low as -17 in some villages and gusts of in excess of 80 miles per hour in our island communities. These conditions have posed challenges in keeping homes warm and secure. We also have the real issue of fuel poverty that affects so many people. In order to try and respond to these challenges ACHA has been investing substantially in energy insulation and more recently external roughcasting and re-roofing. Last year we completed a £4million programme across our housing stock, concentrating on attic insulation. During the current year the Association has put on site projects for roof and roughcast works amounting to just over £8million worth of works. This will cover properties in Helensburgh, Islay, Bute, Cowal, Oban and Dunbeg. To date the Association has had positive feedback from tenants who have had new roofs, new insulation and roughcasting. Many people have said to us it's like having a new home and fuel bills have dropped. We believe that these approaches will not only make our homes more comfortable, particularly in Winter, but will help tenants' fuel budgets for the future.



You will be aware from the earliest days of ACHA we had as our number one objective to modernise all our homes to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015. I am pleased to say that we are currently at 89% compliance and we hope to close out the outstanding works by March 2015.

I would like to finish by recording my thanks to all our tenants who have supported Garden in Bloom. This Summer in particular we have seen a vibrant mix of colours and plants in our communities. ACHA tenants have been at the forefront of that and could I congratulate all of the winners in our communities across Argyll and Bute.

Best wishes
Alastair MacGregor
Chief Executive

Your Voice

At ACHA we want our tenants, owners and other customers to be involved at the heart of our organisation. Over the last year we have been recruiting people to take part in the "Your Voice" Group, which embraces this commitment. We now have a small group of interested people who will come together to scrutinise the services we deliver. The group is independent of ACHA but we will support them to help them achieve their goals. Their first meeting is taking place during November, and we have brought in the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) to speak to the Group and offer guidance on how to get involved. The "Your Voice" Group can choose which areas of service they want to scrutinise and if they feel that there are positive changes to be made then they can make a recommendation to ACHA's Board of Management. It is entirely up to the Group how much time is spent on this and what help is requested from ACHA staff.

The "Your Voice" group enables you to get involved with us, to tell us what you want from the housing service. If you are interested in joining this Group we would like to hear from you. Please contact Alison Rafferty on 01546605801

Direct Debit Draw winner

Every year ACHA has a prize draw for everyone who pays their rent by Direct Debit. The draw was carried out at our Annual General Meeting and the lucky winner of £100 of vouchers was Mr and Mrs Hill, Oban. Congratulations to them.



ACHA Board of Management 2014

Back row, l to r, Councillor Bruce Marshall, Danny Kelly, Councillor Sandy Taylor, Councillor Richard Trail, Colin Davidson, Andy Birnie, Mike Brown (Chair), Cameron Grant, Douglas Prophet
Middle row, l to r, Stafford Day, Councillor Donny MacMillan, Councillor Roddy McCuish, Lorraine-Anne Drysdale, Margaret MacGregor, Jim Milne (Vice Chair),
Front row, Kate Winton

Fire Safety

To help us keep our tenants and their families safe, we ask that you allow AHFA staff access to your home to carry out important safety and servicing checks on all heating systems, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and chimney sweeps.

Some fire safety tips to follow at home:

- * Keep hallways clear to allow unobstructed emergency routes.
- * Take out all plugs at night.
- * Turn off all sources of heat, such as multi-fuel stoves, gas and electric fires when not attended.
- * Ensure nothing flammable is stored beside sources of ignition.
- * Ensure cleaning chemicals are kept apart.
- * Keep a key in your door so as not to waste time looking for a key in the event of an incident.

The Consequences of Criminal Activity with Regards to your ACHA Tenancy

Most tenants are aware of the consequences on their tenancy of failing to pay their rent but many may not be aware of the consequences of a criminal conviction.

If you or a member of your household are convicted of an offence which is punishable by imprisonment, carried out in or in the vicinity of your home or if you have used your home for illegal or immoral purposes, then ACHA can apply to the Court for an order for your eviction. Examples of offences include possession of drugs, drug dealing, assault, harassment, theft or burglary, fire raising or arson and sexual or racial offences.

ACHA has a zero tolerance policy to criminal activities carried out within our homes and although each case will be dealt with individually, action will be taken and in some cases this action will involve eviction.

Over the past year, 5 tenants have lost ACHA homes as a result of their criminal convictions and there are further cases going to Court. The consequences of any criminal activity will not end in the punishment inflicted by the Court, you also risk losing your home.

We would like to know what you think about our new Landlord report, please email us at communications@acha.co.uk

All your comments are included in each report to the Board so they can see what you've said.

Our Landlord Report is available to download from our website—www.acha.co.uk. If you prefer a printed copy is available from your local office, alternatively you could phone 01546 605855, or email us at the email address above.

New free phone contact number for NHS 24

Earlier this year NHS 24, Scotland's provider of telephone and web based health advice and information, launched a free to call number: 111.

This new number means that you can contact the service **free of charge** from a landline or mobile. If you need help at night, or over the weekend and you can't wait until your GP surgery reopens, you can call NHS 24 free on 111. NHS 24 will direct you to the right care for you or the person you are calling for. This may be to your local out of hours services, Accident and Emergency department, or the Scottish Ambulance Service. If appropriate, they may recommend some steps you can take to look after yourself at home. If it is an emergency you should dial 999.

New Text Message Service

Did you know that you are now able to access information on your rent account at the touch of a button? You will also be able to find out the balance of your account and request a call back from our Customer Service Centre if required. All tenants with a mobile phone are eligible for this service ... if you haven't signed up already and are interested, please feel free to ring or call into your local office, (details on the back page).

Email address prize draw

ACHA wants to offer a variety of ways for our tenants to communicate with us. When registering your email address with ACHA, your name will automatically be entered into our prize draw to win £100 worth of vouchers. To register your email address please phone or call into your local office, (details on the back page) .

Congratulations to Mr C Wathey, from Mull who was picked as the winner of the Email address prize draw and wins £100 of vouchers.

Household Tips !

If your kitchen sink or bathroom basin becomes blocked or the water drains away very slowly try these remedies:

- * Pour down boiling water and washing up liquid (good for clearing build up of fats).
- * If that doesn't work, try putting some Soda Crystals down the sink (available at most hardware shops). If all else fails use a trusty plunger and that should clear any blockage.
- * If you report this as a repair you may be charged for unblocking it.

Oban Lorn & Isles

Area Committee have attended local shows in Appin and Dalmally as well as Tiree Community Open Day for 2014. Local staff also attended Bunessan Show as an opportunity to provide information and advice on ACHA's services available.

Pictured below is OLI Area Committee Member, Lorraine-Anne Drysdale in attendance at Dalmally show.



Throughout the summer, the **Bute & Cowal Area Committee** has been keen to publicise the Community Action Fund Scheme operated by ACHA. Up to £500 is available for community groups in the area. Beneficiaries this year have included the Boy's Brigade on Bute, Argyll Voluntary Action, Interloch Transport and the HELP Project. Margaret MacGregor, chair of the committee, said "we would invite local groups to contact us as we are keen to help as many as possible".

The committee has also been judging the garden competition (see separate article) and were again impressed by the high standard of entries.

The Bute & Cowal Area Committee still has vacancies so if you want to make a difference to your community, contact your local office for details of how to join

As Winter approaches various clubs will be starting up again for the Winter season. If your club is a registered Charity and needs some funding our Area Committee can put in a request to ACHA's Community Action Fund. Grants up to £500 can be awarded. Even if your Club has previously applied and been successful you can apply again although first time applicants will take preference. Application forms can be found at your local ACHA office. If you know of a registered charity, please pass this on. Katrina Barr from Campbeltown Brass said "We were delighted to receive funding from ACHA towards our project to create a new percussion ensemble. We were able to purchase much needed new equipment to allow us to start our project. We could not have moved this forward without the support of ACHA and our local community." Regards from the **Mid Argyll and Kintyre Area Committee.**

Lomond Area Committee thought you might like to hear about some of the Charities the Committee have awarded monies too. We helped to assist with the Helensburgh & Lomond Highland Games 2014, the "Fun Day" held in the Kirkmichael Centre over the Summer it also assisted the Project 81 Centre in Garelochhead which works with the youngsters in Argyll and Bute and the Peninsula Players amateur dramatics group situated in Rosneath.

If you know of a Charity that might benefit from a Community Action Fund send them along to their local Area Office for an application form.

Also the Area Committee welcome members of the public to come along and observe the meetings, if this is something you think you might like why not phone your local office for details on 01546 605920.

How to Contact ACHA:

Customer Service Centre 0800 028 2755

(Freephone but mobile charges will apply)

Bute

Union Street, Rothesay PA20 0HD

e-mail: housing.bute@acha.co.uk

telephone 01546 605870

Cowal

Dolphin Hall, Manse Ave, Dunoon PA23

8DQ, e-mail: housing.cowal@acha.co.uk

telephone 01546 605950

Islay

Jamieson Street, Bowmore PA43 7HP

e-mail: housing.islay@acha.co.uk

telephone 01546 605890

Kintyre

Old Quay Head, Campbeltown PA28 6ED

e-mail: housing.kintyre@acha.co.uk

telephone 01546 605880

Mid Argyll

Dalriada House, Lochgilphead PA31 8JL

e-mail: housing.midargyll@acha.co.uk

telephone 01546 605800

Oban, Lorn and Isles

Menzies House, Glenshellach Business

Park, Oban PA34 4RY

e-mail: housing.lorn@acha.co.uk

telephone 01546 605930

Helensburgh & Lomond

31 James Street, Helensburgh G84 8AS

e-mail: housing.lomond@acha.co.uk

telephone 01546 605920

In January 2015, our Helensburgh staff will move to Lamont House, 9-19 Stuckleckie

Road, Helensburgh, G84 7NL

ACHA's

Community Action Fund

If you are part of a registered charity that could make use of a grant up to £500, then contact ACHA on 01546 605922 and ask for our Community Action Fund application form - it's only one page. Good luck!

Some recent grant recipients:-

Argyll Voluntary Action
Dunoon Link Club
Rothesay Playgroup
Helensburgh Baptist Church
Oban Youth Club

Are you a Member (£1 for life) of ACHA?

If not, you could be mission out on the chance of winning a lovely food hamper.

Each year just before Christmas, we put the names of all our Members into a hat and draw out one name for each of our four areas.

Congratulations to our 2013 winners:

Ms M Howie, Helensburgh
Mr G Collier, Sandbank
Mrs M MacKay, Barcaldine
Mrs I Hatton, Lochgilphead

If you would like to become a Member, please ask at any ACHA office for an application form.

Good Neighbour Award

Is your neighbour one in a million?

Do they make a difference to your life or the lives of people in your community?

We're looking for nominations of ACHA tenants for this award and the winner will receive a £100 shopping voucher. The winner will be selected by representatives from each of our four Area Committees. Please contact your local area office for a nomination form, or alternatively visit our website www.acha.co.uk/

If you would like this newsletter in larger print, in an alternative language, on audio CD or in an electronic format or you would like someone to read it or explain any of it please contact Charlene Munro on 01546 605855 or communications@acha.co.uk

All our newsletters are available on our website www.acha.co.uk